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Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) has made significant progress in strengthening the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation pursuant to the requests of the General Assembly to enable the Foundation both to support the activities of UN-Habitat and to mobilize resources to complement efforts by Member States to provide affordable shelter, infrastructure and basic services. A three-year pilot project for the Slum Upgrading Facility has been launched. UN-Habitat expanded its efforts at the country level to build the capacity of Member States to achieve the Millennium Development Goal targets on slums and to respond to demand for disaster mitigation and post-conflict humanitarian assistance and reconstruction. Based on a collaboration agreement with the United Nations Development Programme, UN-Habitat placed 32 national Habitat Programme Managers to bring human settlements issues into the mainstream in national development strategies. The monitoring and research activities of the Programme have been adjusted to support the efforts of Member States to monitor the implementation of the targets concerning slums in the Millennium Development Goals and to analyse policies and prepare flagship reports that will enable Governments and other Habitat Agenda partners achieve those targets. UN-Habitat published the *State of the World's Cities 2004*, and the *Global Report on Human Settlements* for 2005, on the theme of financing urban shelter.

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As the Programme of the United Nations responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and for assisting Member States achieve the targets set forth in the Millennium Declaration, UN-Habitat has created forums for global networking and established strategic partnerships. The second World Urban Forum was successfully held in Barcelona, Spain, in September 2004. Plans are under way to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Habitat Conference by holding the third session of the World Urban Forum in Vancouver, Canada, in June 2006. The Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and the Global Campaign on Urban Governance were launched in over 10 countries within the framework of the Millennium Development Goal targets and the Programme of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, with follow-up actions being initiated to build local capacities. Water and sanitation programmes in least developed countries in the Great Lakes region of East Africa and the Mekong Delta of South-East Asia have been launched under the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund. The report concludes with a set of recommendations.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/239 of 22 December 2004, entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

II. Progress made in the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

A. Institutional context and operating environment

1. The Millennium Development Goals

2. The Millennium Development Goals have served during the reporting period as powerful vehicles for giving focus to the work of UN-Habitat and for harmonizing the collective efforts of United Nations organizations and Member States to eradicate poverty. This is particularly so for the development of human settlements, where the preferred approach is, by necessity, multisector, multiactor and integrated — and where coordination is all the more imperative.

3. The living and working conditions of urban slum-dwellers have historically been a peripheral concern of the international community. The advent of the seventh Millennium Development Goal, however, has changed this situation, elevating the issue significantly. International organizations and Member States, together with other Habitat Agenda partners, are increasingly coming to terms with the mammoth challenge of dealing with rapid, poorly managed urbanization and the consequential proliferation of unplanned, unserviced slums and informal settlements. Target 10 to reduce by half the persons living without safe drinking water and sanitation, and target 11 to improve the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by the year 2020, as well as working to achieve the objective of "cities without slums" — are increasingly featured in the national development agenda of many Member States. Some Governments have established trust funds for slum upgrading, while others have instituted national policies and programmes with a view to offering the urban poor security of tenure and a role in decision-making as genuine development partners.

4. That said, not all countries have embraced the significance of the slum targets and the catalytic role embodied in the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Unlawful forced evictions and demolitions remain a bad practice of many Member States. Rather than consult with slum-dwellers and engage in a process of shared responsibility for relocation and resettlement and rather than recognize the urban poor as a feature of the new urban economy with a need to be empowered, there remains an unrealistic hope for the urban poor that they will simply return to their rural areas. The adamancy underlying these regressive views underscores the challenges and important role ahead for UN-Habitat. Now more than ever, it will be crucial to advance a normative agenda through the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and the Global Campaign on Urban Governance, to

offer practical policy alternatives supported through peer exchange and the exchange of lessons learned from best practice and to back advocacy with technical assistance that ensures investment follow through.

2. In-depth evaluation

5. During the reporting period, the Office of Internal Oversight Services carried out an in-depth evaluation of UN-Habitat. The evaluation report will serve as an excellent tool to strengthen the management and performance of UN-Habitat, in the light of the heavy responsibility placed on the newly transformed programme to respond appropriately to the serious challenges posed by rapid urbanization. At its forty-fifth session, in June 2005, the Committee for Programme and Coordination expressed satisfaction with the recommendations made by the Office, noting the report's overall positive assessment of UN-Habitat and supporting the very important work conducted by the Programme, particularly in implementing the Millennium Development Goals.

6. The Committee for Programme and Coordination agreed with the main critical finding of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, that UN-Habitat needed to sharpen its focus and narrow its scope of activities. Additional recommendations of the Office included to accelerate the recruitment of a Deputy Executive Director in order to support the Executive Director in promoting the work of the Programme externally, administering the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation and enhancing coordination among subprogrammes. UN-Habitat has since made progress on recruiting a Deputy Executive Director and anticipates filling the position within the calendar year.

7. The in-depth evaluation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services embraced the findings of a separate external evaluation on the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and the Global Campaign on Urban Governance. It called for greater linkage between the advocacy instruments and other programmes and advisory services of UN-Habitat and for increased core funding for the global campaigns. The Office further recommended an increase in the regular budget resources for UN-Habitat, promulgating the operating rules of the Foundation and for the Programme to become a full participating member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

3. Commission for Sustainable Development

8. UN-Habitat successfully contributed to the preparations for and deliberations of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session. At its twentieth session, in April 2005, the Governing Council of UN-Habitat deliberated on the issues that would be considered by the Commission pertaining to water, sanitation and human settlements — the three pillars of sustainable development. These deliberations resulted in the adoption by the Council of its resolution 20/20, entitled "Thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development". The Council also adopted a summary by the President of the Governing Council. The Executive Director presented the summary of the President to the Commission at its high-level segment.

9. The Commission embraced the core message of the Governing Council that the issues of water and sanitation should be integrated into a broad-based framework on human settlements. It acknowledged the significance of the urban dimension of poverty reduction, recognizing the need for a multisector, multiactor, integrated

approach to human settlements development. In addition, the Commission advanced understanding on the strategic links between sustainable human settlements and sources of energy, the central theme of the Commission at its fourteenth and fifteenth sessions.

10. Resolution 13/1 adopted by the Commission at its thirteenth session, inter alia requests UN-Habitat as the focal agency for human settlements, to facilitate, in close collaboration with relevant United Nations organizations and programmes as well as other partners, effective global monitoring of progress in the implementation of human settlements goals and targets, as well as measures agreed at the thirteenth session of the Commission concerning human settlements.

B. United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation

11. UN-Habitat made significant progress in strengthening the Foundation, pursuant to the requests of the General Assembly to enable the Foundation both to support the activities of the Programme and to mobilize resources to complement efforts by Member States to provide affordable shelter, infrastructure and services. The Foundation serves two purposes: it is a repository of voluntary earmarked and non-earmarked contributions by Member States for the implementation of the work programme of UN-Habitat; and, since 2004, it is a special vehicle designed to assist Member States in mobilizing public and private capital for follow-up investment.

1. Voluntary contributions to UN-Habitat

12. UN-Habitat launched an aggressive campaign to solidify its financial base to carry out and improve the delivery of its approved work programme. The total voluntary contributions to the Foundation increased by almost 30 per cent, from $26 million in 2003 to $33 million in 2004. Two multi-year funding agreements were signed with major donors. In addition, donors have been encouraged to sign multi-year partnership agreements, in order to provide more predictable soft earmarked funding for major thematic priorities of the work programme and better to respond to demands by Member States.

13. Of the total voluntary contributions to the Foundation, non-earmarked contributions rose from $8.3 million in 2003 to $10.5 million in 2004, while earmarked contributions rose from $17.2 million to $22.2 million during the same period. While commendable progress has been made in resource mobilization, there is still a major imbalance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions. Furthermore, approximately 75 per cent of the non-earmarked contributions came from five donors, indicating a need to broaden the donor base.

14. The twentieth session of the Governing Council took note of these challenges and called upon Governments and other Habitat Agenda partners to increase their contributions to the Foundation and to give priority to non-earmarked, multi-year funding to support the Executive Director in her efforts to broaden the donor base of the Programme. In addition, the Executive Director was requested to develop an overarching resource-mobilization strategy, taking into account options pursued by other United Nations bodies for broadening the donor base and, in particular, encouraging non-earmarked contributions.

2. Human Settlements Financing

15. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat officially launched its newest subprogramme, the Human Settlements Financing Division, providing the Foundation with an operational platform for mobilizing resources at the country level for shelter, infrastructure and basic services. Significant progress was made in establishing the Slum Upgrading Facility, a technical assistance and seed-capital vehicle for attracting domestic capital investments for slum upgrading, including raising $1.8 million for the design phase and $10 million for a three-year pilot phase, with an additional amount of $10 million pledged. The scope of the Facility during the initial three-year pilot phase includes East Africa, West Africa, South Asia and South-East Asia and constitutes one of the most innovative strategies adopted by UN-Habitat. When fully functional, the Slum Upgrading Facility will provide follow-up assistance to ongoing pre-investment activities carried out under the Programme's technical cooperation activities (see paras. 17-22, below). It will accomplish this by enabling cities, slum-dwellers, financial intermediaries, Governments and the financial service sector to package their upgrading projects in ways that will attract private investment. It will also make available to local actors, bridging finance and credit enhancements that can catalyse domestic capital, thereby augmenting community savings and public investment. The work of the Facility is essential to field-test financial instruments and approaches, such as loan guarantees and special purpose vehicles in emerging market economies where domestic capital is plentiful but the means to harness it scarce. UN-Habitat will implement the Facility by combining in-house political and technical expertise on slum upgrading with the support of an international service contractor, recruited through competitive bidding, specializing in investment and project finance.

16. Significant progress was made in working in parallel with international financial institutions. These partners include the World Bank group and regional development banks (see paras. 27-33, below), as well as GuarantCo, a loan guarantee facility of the Private Infrastructure Development Group that has expressed interest in ring-fencing 20 per cent of its funds for pilot projects initiated by the Slum Upgrading Facility. Further, UN-Habitat has strengthened inter-institutional relations with the Development Credit Authority of the United States Agency for International Development and is exploring co-financing support to slum upgrading initiatives in Ghana and Uganda. Additional work with international financial institutions includes opportunities for support from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and a number of private foundations.

C. Technical assistance and cooperation at the country level

17. UN-Habitat continued to expand the technical assistance it provides to over 80 Governments in two broad areas of intervention: building the capacity of Member States to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and responding to demands for disaster mitigation and post-conflict reconstruction. Contributions to its technical cooperation activities increased considerably, from $15.2 million in 2003 to $52.5 million in 2004. The funding was predominantly for reconstruction and disaster mitigation activities at the country level from a variety of donors. The Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People in support of human settlements development in the occupied Palestinian territories has to date been capitalized with an amount of slightly over $1.5 million since its

establishment. Efforts to mobilize additional financial resources towards the full capitalization of $5 million are continuing. UN-Habitat has requested additional resources from the regular budget in its budget submission for the biennium 2006-2007, which includes two additional Professional level posts.

1. Support to Member States for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals

18. The type of support provided by the Programme for local implementation of the Millennium Development Goals has included a combination of advocacy, country assessment, policy advice, capacity-building, project demonstration and field-testing of approaches and instruments. Technical assistance of this kind has been directed at organizations of slum-dwellers, support non-governmental organizations, local authorities, private service providers and utility companies, and departments of central Government, with emphasis on ministries of lands, housing, local government, construction and water. Substantive inputs to local actors range from land administration to demand-based water management, participatory planning, urban crime and safety and inclusive urban management. The advent of the new subprogramme has resulted in the expansion of local actors to include retail banks, cooperative savings associations, housing microfinance institutions, as well as ministries of finance and in the expansion of substantive inputs to include investment, housing and project finance.

2. Post-conflict humanitarian assistance and reconstruction

19. UN-Habitat recently became a member of the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs. It has contributed its experience in disaster mitigation and post-conflict assistance in Afghanistan, Iraq, Timor-Leste, Liberia, the West Bank and Gaza, countries affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami and the Sudan. In these countries and regions, the Programme has sought to promote shelter and urban issues. For example, in the humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region of the Sudan, the Programme has, in its work with the United Nations country team, stressed the massive influx of migration to Khartoum resulting from the conflict. Preliminary analysis indicates that most of the internally displaced persons will remain in Khartoum after the crisis in Darfur subsides, with significant social, political and economic implications for the city. UN-Habitat has also introduced shelter policy elements into post-disaster and post-conflict situations at the early stages of humanitarian assistance rather than later during the reconstruction phase when policy interventions may be less effective. The United Nations organizations and Member States have found this contribution especially helpful in situations where land policies and zoning and building standards determine how and where affected populations recover from human or natural disasters. Specific technical assistance provided by UN-Habitat has included training and capacity-building for ministries and line agencies in charge of disaster prevention and management; identification of disaster prone areas and formulation of mitigation strategies; rapid response to post-disaster and post-conflict situations and sustained technical assistance to post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

3. Coordination and regional support

20. UN-Habitat has provided technical assistance to Member States to implement the Millennium Development Goals and to respond to human and natural disasters

by coordinating its efforts with other organizations of the United Nations system. Through a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Development Programme, it has placed national Habitat Programme Managers in 32 countries. These experienced professionals with in-depth knowledge of local conditions are contributing to bringing human settlements issues into the mainstream in national agendas and promoting an urban dimension to poverty reduction strategy papers, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the World Bank Country Assistance Strategies.

21. Human settlements officers working in regional offices of UN-Habitat have played a vital role in back-stopping operations at the country level and supporting the work of Habitat Programme Managers. The regional offices in Fukuoka, Japan (for Asia and the Pacific), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (for Latin America and the Caribbean) and Nairobi (for Africa and the Arab States) also work closely with the United Nations economic and social commissions for Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa, respectively.

22. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat contributed to a report by the Economic Commission for Africa that has identified rapid urbanization as a key challenge for Africa. The Programme has also worked closely with the New Partnership for Africa's Development to advance the urban agenda. Emphasis has been placed on national polices for urban development, shelter and slum upgrading.

D. Monitoring and research

23. UN-Habitat has adjusted its monitoring and research activities to support the efforts of Member States to monitor the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and to analyse policies and practices that will enable them to achieve the targets.

1. Monitoring activities

24. Urban indicators, initially developed to monitor the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, were revised in line with the goals of the Millennium Declaration and all data collected since 2004 is disaggregated by gender. Strategic partnerships at the global and national levels were established to strengthen the capacity of national bureaux of statistics to collect data on urban indicators and inform urban policy in 11 countries in Africa and Asia. Work on the documentation and dissemination of best practices in improving the living environment reached a new milestone, with over 2,000 peer-reviewed practices from 140 countries currently available online, while a new methodology was successfully field-tested and applied in 10 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America for the participatory assessment of pro-poor, gender-sensitive urban policies and legislation in support of the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Other outputs include strategic guidelines for working with civil society organizations and youth; materials on advocacy for women's rights to land; a handbook on gender mainstreaming in human settlements; a guide to community-based housing finance credit schemes and a number of case studies on financing low-income housing. Seminal research was undertaken in analysing urban economic conditions, rural-urban linkages and effective strategies for improving urban self-employment and livelihood for the urban poor.

September 2004, under the theme of cities as crossroads of culture. Through a set of structured dialogues among various Habitat Agenda partners, significant attention was paid to the Millennium Declaration, with special emphasis on progress made in achieving target 10 under goal 7 on water and sanitation and target 11 under goal 7 on improving the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by the year 2020. The Forum attracted 4,389 participants, including Government officials (17.7 per cent), local authorities (16.4 per cent), non-governmental organizations (21.2 per cent), United Nations entities (4.1 per cent), professional and research institutions (8 per cent) and the private sector (8 per cent). A range of initiatives and best practices were showcased by 60 exhibitions from all over the world. The Forum consisted of dialogues among partners on urban culture, urban realities, urban governance and urban renaissance, as well as thematic discussions on urban poverty, urban resources, urban sustainability, urban services, and urban disasters and reconstruction. The whole event was characterized by vibrant exchanges. Distinguished participants included former presidents Mikhail Gorbachev and Martti Ahtisaari, Jeffrey Sachs and the late Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafic Hariri, who was presented with a special citation of the Habitat Scroll of Honour for his visionary role in the reconstruction of post-conflict Lebanon. Evaluation of the World Urban Forum by participants was very positive. The third World Urban Forum will be held in Vancouver, Canada, in June 2006 on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, which gave birth to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

2. Multilateral development institutions

29. The World Bank group is one of the main partners of UN-Habitat in improving the living and working conditions of the urban poor. During the reporting period, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat and the President of the World Bank held consultations and agreed to establish a cooperation agreement to provide greater coherence to urban development interventions at the country level. Emphasis was placed on ways to promote housing finance and urban development more squarely in the national development agenda, including in the Country Assistance Strategy used by the World Bank to establish investment programming and poverty reduction strategy papers. In addition, the World Bank and UN-Habitat carried out a number of activities under their joint Cities Alliance programme, with 10 bilateral development agencies and associations of local authorities. The Cities Alliance provides small grants that support the formulation of city development strategies and citywide slum upgrading initiatives. In Egypt, Morocco, the Philippines, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen, working within the Cities Alliance, the World Bank and UN-Habitat are collaborating to strengthen local government authorities, help in the emergency reconstruction of urban infrastructure, initiate and sustain labour-intensive municipal public works, formulate city development strategies and set up urban indicators databases. The members of the Cities Alliance also played a crucial role in supporting the development of the UN-Habitat Slum Upgrading Facility, mobilizing financial contributions through a trust fund of the World Bank dedicated to that purpose.

30. UN-Habitat also signed agreements with the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the African Development Bank for joint projects and programmes for water, sanitation, housing and urban development, focusing on improving the living conditions of the urban poor. These agreements

have led to substantial programme collaboration, for example on the Water for Asian Cities programme, which provides a pipeline of $10 million in grants from the Asian Development Bank and UN-Habitat for the first two phases and $500 million in Asian Development Bank loans for water and sanitation projects in cities across Asia. Negotiations with the African Development Bank for a similar facility are at an advanced stage. The partnerships have leveraged additional funding from the Government of the Netherlands.

South-south cooperation

31. A key tool in attaining the targets of the Millennium Declaration, particularly the slum, water and sanitation targets, is south-south cooperation. While two decades ago the effectiveness of south-south cooperation may have been limited, many developing countries have since acquired substantial technical and policy expertise. UN-Habitat is bringing the use of such expertise into the mainstream throughout its normative and operational activities.

32. UN-Habitat is a strong and committed advocate for peer learning and problem solving. At a high level, UN-Habitat actively supports and participates in regional ministerial meetings on housing, land and urban development in Latin America, Africa and Asia. The African Ministers Conference on Housing and Urban Development took place in 2005 in Durban, South Africa, as a joint undertaking by UN-Habitat, the African Union and the Government of South Africa. Ministers agreed to carry the Conference forward in a biennial series of ministerial meetings to be convened in Nairobi on the occasion of the biennial sessions of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat. For its part, the African Union at its annual meeting held in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in June 2005, formally accepted the Conference and affirmed sustainable urbanization as a policy priority. The African Union further called upon UN-Habitat and the United Nations Environment Programme to support development and effectiveness of the Conference. A similar high-level meeting was held in Latin America during the reporting period and one is scheduled in Asia for 2006.

33. UN-Habitat has also supported peer learning at the city level, sponsoring exchanges, workshops, training and field trips among cities (for example, Addis Ababa; Arusha; Dar es Salaam; Durban, South Africa; Cuba; Manila; Medellin, Colombia; Mumbai; Nairobi; Johannesburg, South Africa; and United Republic of Tanzania). These activities involved city authorities and community leaders, including those from slums, to ensure cross-fertilization between urban poor communities regarding community mobilization strategies, negotiation practices for access to land, community-based savings and strategies for citywide slum upgrading. Topics of recent city-to-city cooperation sponsored by UN-Habitat include land law, land tenure, women's security of tenure, local government training, city environmental profiles, best practices, safety and justice and the use of information and communication technology.

F. Advocacy, tool development and capacity-building

1. Security of tenure

34. During the period under review, the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure was successfully launched in five countries in West Africa and Latin America and the

Caribbean. Preparatory activities were initiated in eight additional countries. Memorandums of understanding were signed with three countries in East Africa, while cooperation agreements were concluded with five other countries to promote slum upgrading. The Land Tool Network, a global network of land tool developers, was established as a practical follow-up action to campaign advocacy. Work was carried out on law and land review in three regions and lessons learned from peer-reviewed best practices were fed into the campaign. The International Advisory Group on Forced Evictions, an international task force to facilitate negotiated policy alternatives to unlawful eviction, was established resulting in the creation in several countries of a post of housing rights officer. Progress was made in implementing the Water for African Cities and Water for Asian Cities programmes. This included regional and national consultations in the Great Lakes region of Africa and the Mekong Delta and technical assistance to community-led initiatives for improving water and sanitation. Consultations on water for Eastern European cities were initiated, while training and capacity-building for water supply management was carried out in eight countries. The period also saw the inception of the Cities Without Slums Subregional Programme for Eastern and Southern Africa, facilitating cooperation between slum-dwellers and city governments in Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

2. Urban governance

35. The Global Campaign on Urban Governance was launched in Burkina Faso, Cuba, Mexico, Morocco and Senegal. Follow-up support on the application of inclusive urban governance was provided to African and South Asian countries. The international association United Cities and Local Governments held a unification congress in 2004 and draft guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities were prepared and widely disseminated. UN-Habitat has strengthened its relationships with local authorities and their associations through a cooperation agreement signed in September 2004 with United Cities and Local Governments and the establishment of an Advisory Group of Experts on Decentralization. The efforts by UN-Habitat to promote pro-poor, gender-sensitive policy tools to improve urban governance have led to high demand by local authorities for training and advisory services. Considerable inroads were made in environmental planning and management in Africa and South Asia. Work on the strategy for addressing shelter problems for women and orphans affected by HIV/AIDS in informal settlements is ongoing in East Africa.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

36. **The consequences of rapid urbanization, combined with poor urban governance, weak economic growth and HIV/AIDS, have reached crisis proportions in cities and urban areas of much of the developing world, especially in Africa. The sustainability of cities, highlighted by the slum target of the Millennium Development Goals, has become a key challenge for the international community.**

37. **Cognizant of this crisis, the General Assembly transformed UN-Habitat into a programme of the United Nations system and called for the strengthening of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation. An**

aggressive campaign has been launched by the secretariat of UN-Habitat to fulfil its role and mandate as a full-fledged programme through internal organization enhanced by an in-depth evaluation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, through external engagements of the World Urban Forum and through partnerships with the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and other international organizations.

38. Slum upgrading provides a unique opportunity for attaining the Millennium Development Goals. Security of tenure and improvements in shelter, water and sanitation have automatic knock-on effects in terms of health and nutrition, gender equality and the empowerment of women, and reduction of vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Both the crisis of rapid urbanization and the unique opportunity presented by slum upgrading for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals call for Governments to adopt, as a matter of urgency, pro-poor, gender-sensitive urban policies and action plans, as called for in the Habitat Agenda.

39. Governments in a position to do so are encouraged to strengthen the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation by providing non-earmarked, predictable funding and regular budget resources for its core programme activities.

40. Governments and financial institutions are encouraged to contribute generously to the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, the Slum Upgrading Facility and other technical cooperation trust funds to enable UN-Habitat to mobilize public investment and private capital for shelter and basic services.

41. Governments are encouraged to support the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, working with Habitat Programme Managers to promote slum upgrading, affordable shelter and sustainable urbanization.

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Sustainable development: implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Status of preparations for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The General Assembly, concerned over the exacerbation of desertification, particularly in Africa, and its far-reaching implications for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular on poverty eradication, adopted at its fifty-eighth session resolution 58/211, which declared 2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. The resolution was adopted as a means of raising public awareness of the issue of desertification and of protecting the biological diversity, knowledge and traditions of those communities affected by desertification.

In paragraph 6 of its resolution 58/211, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixtieth session on the status of preparations for the Year.

The present report is being submitted as a follow-up to that specific request and provides information on the steps taken by the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, as designated focal point for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, for the implementation of resolution 58/211. It also describes the objectives identified for the International Year and the coordination and cooperation initiatives with institutional partners and parties to the Convention.

The last part of the present report contains conclusions and recommendations to the General Assembly to ensure the success of the International Year.

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I. Background

1. The twenty-second session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, recalling the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, adopted decision 22/15 inviting the General Assembly to consider declaring an international year of deserts and desertification as soon as possible.

2. At its fifty-eighth session the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/211, which declared 2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. In doing so, the General Assembly underlined its deep concern over the exacerbation of desertification, particularly in Africa, and duly noted its far-reaching implications for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular those relating to poverty eradication.

3. In the resolution the General Assembly called upon Governments to contribute to the activities of the Year and was aimed at raising public awareness of the issue with a view to protecting the biological diversity of deserts as well as the traditional knowledge of those communities affected by desertification. It also:

(a) Invited all countries to establish national committees or focal points and to celebrate the Year by arranging appropriate activities;

(b) Designated the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, as focal point of the Year, in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and other relevant bodies of the United Nations;

(c) Encouraged countries to contribute, as they are able, to the Convention and to undertake special initiatives in observance of the Year with the goal of enhancing the implementation of the Convention;

(d) Called upon all relevant international organizations and Member States to support the activities related to desertification, including land degradation, to be organized by affected countries, in particular African and least developed countries.

II. Lines of action

4. The International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006 will coincide with the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The Convention, adopted in Paris on 17 June 1994 and opened for signature at the same venue on 14 and 15 October 1994, entered into force on 26 December 1996, 90 days after the fiftieth ratification was received. To this day, the Convention counts 191 parties, making it one of the most representative instruments of the Rio generation.

5. Within such a perspective, the International Year of Deserts and Desertification constitutes an opportunity to strengthen the visibility and importance

of the drylands issue on the international environmental agenda. In that regard, it is a unique opportunity to bring across the message of the people of the drylands while underlining the daily plight and commitment of these communities to the objectives of sustainable development. It also draws the attention of the international community towards the great challenges that still lay ahead in this strategic field, and increases the momentum of the Convention process, by raising its public profile, promoting the role and comparative advantages of its parties and institutional partners.

6. With a view to fully capitalizing on the expected momentum to be generated by the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, its conception, launching and celebration are being engineered around the promotion of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification process and the complementary advantages of its multilateral and bilateral partners. In this context, it is expected that the Year will lead to the achievement of a set of concrete and measurable objectives:

(a) *Long-term oriented implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification* through the promotion of targeted local, national and international events with the aim of facilitating the implementation of the Convention, while also raising awareness about desertification and focusing attention on the way States parties, local communities and individuals contribute to combat desertification. The Bonn Declaration requested States parties to make all necessary arrangements to ensure that the elaboration of the action programmes was finalized by the end of 2005. The year 2006 could then be used as the starting line for broad implementation of those programmes worldwide. The momentum generated by the International Year could be of paramount importance for the implementation process of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, creating a multiplier effect at the national and international levels. Partnership agreements and donor round tables could be scheduled during the Year for the launching of the implementation of the action programmes. Building upon the dynamic of the Global Compact Initiative, the private sector could be further involved in the process through strategic financial support to targeted areas of interest;

(b) *Awareness of desertification implications*, by profiling desertification as a major threat to vulnerable ecosystems and to mankind, reinforced by the scenarios of climate change and loss of biological diversity, with due emphasis on the relationship with food insecurity, poverty, migration and conflicts in the context of the Millennium Development Goals;

(c) *Networking with all stakeholders*, by encouraging the mobilization of a broad and innovative international partnership to combat land degradation and desertification through patronage and partnerships with States parties, national and international organizations, civil society, academic institutions and the business community. The General Assembly, by designating the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as focal point of the Year, in conjunction with UNEP, UNDP, IFAD and other relevant bodies of the United Nations, clearly indicated the need for partnership in the implementation of the Convention. Accordingly, it builds upon the Convention mandate for partnership and collaboration with the United Nations in the implementation of the Convention to ensure that the International Year of Deserts and Desertification is a success. Additionally, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/211, the

secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification will assist the 191 parties to the Convention to establish national committees, which will be in charge of coordinating the celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification at the national level. The objective of the national committees will be to prepare, implement and follow up relevant year activities in their countries. The way in which the committees operate will be decided at the country level. The Convention secretariat could assist by preparing guidelines for committee establishment, with suggestions on their composition and work. The committees could be constituted by non-governmental or community-based organizations, scientific institutions and the public sector so as to ensure representation for all stakeholders, prevent duplication of the activities proposed and help to broaden the circulation of information;

(d) *Dissemination of information* related to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, by focusing attention on human activities that spread desertification throughout all regions of the planet, fine-tuning the message to also address emerging fields of interest and potential consequences that go beyond traditional focus fields (such as poverty and hunger, social unrest, political instability, conflict or mass migrations), and providing elements on effective ways to counter fatalistic perceptions. In such a context, emphasize the economic importance of ecosystem services in the drylands and promote best practices and disseminate information through all possible channels.

7. For that purpose, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification is planning to launch a dedicated "Year 2006" website expected to be set up well in advance of 2006 and run from the website of the Convention secretariat. However, simply establishing one website as a resource base will not provide the necessary technical support required by journalists worldwide. While the project will be aimed at establishing a web-based information centre and database, it will nevertheless need to strengthen the networks of journalists and other relevant information providers.

8. At the end of the Year, it is expected that a large network of environmental journalists in both developed and developing countries will have a better understanding of the global relevance of desertification. Furthermore, it is also expected that target groups, including government representatives, non-governmental organizations, local communities and the general public will be benefiting from the dissemination and sharing of a growing array of best practices and lessons learned through a variety of media channels.

III. Status of preparation

9. Following the declaration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification by the General Assembly on 23 December 2003, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, in his capacity as designated focal point of the Year, has given priority to the coordination of international and national initiatives with potential partners to ensure for the timely preparation and successful celebration of the Year.

A. International

10. With a view to defining a common strategy for the celebration of the Year and to take full advantage of the unique comparative advantages and expertise of the United Nations system, an inter-agency committee has been constituted, bringing together the principal institutional partners of the United Nations active in the Convention implementation process (UNEP, UNDP, IFAD, the World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Volunteers, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others), including those specifically designated by resolution 58/211.

11. A tentative list of activities has been drawn up by the inter-agency committee for the commemoration of the International Year (see annex). (For specific budget figures and further information on each one of the activities, refer to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification document ICCD/COP(7)/2.Add.2.) The activities identified essentially concern the fields of media, culture and communication, with a view to launching an ambitious information and awareness-raising campaign aimed at the international general public and decision makers.

B. Other activities at the international level

12. In addition to the activities jointly planned and scheduled by the inter-agency committee, partner international organizations have also provided for the organization of specific initiatives identified and devised on the basis of their respective fields of expertise and mandates.

13. In this regard, and upon a request by the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Council of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) has adopted and sent a circular to national postal administrations worldwide, encouraging the production of stamps for the promotion and commemoration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. A similar request has been addressed to the United Nations Postal Administration for the production of a series of stamps portraying the two issues at stake: deserts and desertification.

14. In addition, UNEP is planning to launch two publications on the occasion of 2006. The first, entitled Global Environmental Outlook for Deserts report (GEO-Deserts), is scheduled to be published on the occasion of the World Environment and World Desertification Days, respectively 5 and 17 June 2006. A second publication highlighting UNEP activities in dryland environmental management is to be launched in September or October 2006. Furthermore, UNEP is planning a scientific conference on the theme "Dryland environmental management and the Millennium Development Goals", expected to be held at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, in September/October 2006.

15. UNESCO, in collaboration with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat and a group of partner agencies (FAO, UNDP, UNEP, IFAD, the United Nations University (UNU), the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), GEF, the Sahara and Sahel Observatory, the International Council for Science

among others) is planning an international scientific conference, entitled The Future of Drylands. The conference, tentatively scheduled to be held in Tunis at the end of June 2006, will endeavour to take stock of 50 years of experience in dryland studies, policies and development programmes and to redefine future priorities to promote sustainable development in the world's drylands. A call for papers will be launched soon and it is hoped that a number of experts of affected States parties will be able to attend the conference.

16. Based on the success of the first edition of the UNESCO-United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification education kit on combating desertification, which was widely distributed to primary schools in desertification-affected countries, UNESCO expects, in cooperation with the Convention secretariat, to finalize a new edition of the kit. The new kit, labelled "A creative approach to environmental education in drylands and highlands", will be targeted at primary and secondary schools in dryland and mountainous countries.

17. The Convention on Biological Diversity, based on the programme of work on the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands, will collaborate with the secretariats of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to organize in 2006 regional synergy workshops in Asia or Latin America and the Caribbean to implement the programmes of work on dry and sub-humid lands and agricultural biodiversity.

18. UNDP will put in place a process for communicating information on the International Year of Deserts and Desertification to UNDP resident representatives to encourage active country-level participation during the celebration of the World Day to Combat Desertification and support advocacy efforts for hunger and poverty eradication in the drylands. UNDP will also support a number of countries celebrating the World Day to Combat Desertification by raising the profile of the events in each country and publicizing the overall effort globally. UNDP is also preparing a paper entitled "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the drylands".

19. In 2006, FAO will implement the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands programme, which will provide and disseminate a number of information and awareness documents. In addition, FAO has started to promote the forestry dialogue in eastern, southern and western parts of Africa in collaboration with subregional organizations.

20. The International Fund for Agricultural Development has established an interdepartmental working group to develop a communication plan with the aim of enhancing the objectives of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. In collaboration with the Global Mechanism, it will prepare a showcasing of IFAD activities, with particular emphasis on women and desertification. IFAD will also prepare a document on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to draw lessons from relevant country and project case studies to facilitate mainstreaming of the objectives of the Convention.

21. In addition to the coordination role assigned to it by resolution 58/211, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification has identified core activities to be promoted and launched by its secretariat for 2006:

(a) Preparation of promotional publications and memorabilia, including new information products to be available in all six United Nations languages (2006 booklet, flyers, International Year of Deserts and Desertification press kit, poster campaign, etc.);

(b) Television and radio clips, films, documentaries and interviews on deserts and desertification. The International Year of Deserts and Desertification lends itself to the launching of a whole series of documentary programmes on desertification that could be produced and broadcast by major international media organizations and networks;

(c) Establishment of a dedicated website with contact information, a list of activities and events, guidelines, contact details and other issues related to the Year;

(d) A photo competition launched by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to promote the International Year of Deserts and Desertification in 2006. A jury of eminent personalities will select the three photographs that conceptually and artistically best depict the problem of land degradation. The project was made possible thanks to the generous support of Hewlett Packard, the World Bank, TerrAfrica, the International Fertilizer Industry Association, Landgraedsla rikisins, the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies and Entico Corporation Ltd.;

(e) Logo competition. In March 2005, the United Nations agencies involved in the preparation and celebration of the 2006 International Year of Deserts and Desertification decided to organize a logo competition as the best way to identify the most suitable image to portray the message of the Year. One month after the opening of the competition to the general public, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat had received nearly 700 entries for the contest, a number far exceeding expectations. Submissions came from all over the world and were sent by people with different backgrounds, including graphic designers, students, artists and non-governmental organization representatives. After an arduous review of all entries and a selection process involving the members of the inter-agency cluster, the winning logo was unveiled in Bonn during the third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention. Its design and overall conception was found to best depict the issue at stake and convey the message of the United Nations for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification.

22. In addition to the above-mentioned international organizations, several countries and regional authorities have already shown their interest in organizing international events for the celebration of 2006.

23. The Government of Spain indicated its willingness to consider exploring ways and means of organizing a seminar on migration and desertification. Building upon the successful International Symposium on Desertification and Migrations, jointly organized in 1995 by the Government of Spain and the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, such a seminar would seek to address the extremely important links between land degradation, poverty and migration, the latter being one of the most visible and relevant consequences of desertification.

24. In the same framework, the Government of Italy has positively responded to the General Assembly call by supporting the Convention secretariat in the

organization of an international film festival on deserts and desertification, entitled Desert Nights. The festival will attempt to raise the awareness of the general public about the issue of desertification and its social and cultural implications, promote cultural identities and local capacities of dryland communities, and identify and launch concrete actions in support of affected developing countries, particularly in the field of arts and culture. The movies presented at the international film festival will portray day-to-day life in the drylands.

25. Regarding the involvement of regional authorities, the government of Bavaria has planned to organize in Rosenheim (Germany), from March to October 2006, a major archeological and cultural exhibition on the world's deserts, portraying their origin and changing face over thousands of years. Adopting an interactive approach, the exhibit will portray the unique fauna and flora of desert ecosystems, as well as the adaptation strategies developed by their respective communities.

C. Honorary spokespersons for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

26. To ensure a high international profile for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification and the indispensable public and media visibility required for its successful promotion worldwide, the Convention secretariat has explored the possibility of associating internationally recognized figures with the Year.

27. In this context, and after consultations with the Office of the Secretary-General, Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate for 2004 and Deputy Minister of Environment of Kenya, and Cherif Rahmani, Minister of Environment of Algeria, have been named honorary spokespersons for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification.

28. The Convention secretariat is currently exploring the possibility of associating other celebrities with the Year. Aware of the singular impact that people drawn from the fields of culture and entertainment may also have on public opinion, its efforts are currently focusing on those specific areas.

D. National

29. The Executive Secretary of the Convention contacted all parties to inform them of the decision taken by the General Assembly and requesting information on the ways and means envisaged at the national level for the celebration of the International Year. At the same time, States parties were encouraged to take the necessary steps required to provide high visibility to the activities forming part of the celebration of the Year and, in doing so, ensure the greatest possible impact at the national, regional and international levels. In this regard, a letter containing a questionnaire was sent to all parties to identify the person or institution that would be responsible for coordinating these activities at the national level.

30. Pursuant to paragraph 19 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 relating to procedures for organizing the celebration of international years and anniversaries, the letter indicated that provisions should be made for national committees to be set up to prepare for, conduct and follow up on the International Year, in close cooperation with the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to

Combat Desertification. In this context and in order to fully build upon the comparative advantage of the Convention implementation process at the national level, the secretariat encouraged parties, when applicable, to consider entrusting their respective national committees on desertification with this task.

31. To date, the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification has received 20 confirmations from parties in that regard. The secretariat understands that parties are still in the process of internal consultations and believes that the remaining confirmations will be received in due course. The activities envisaged by the countries that have replied to the request include a wide range of areas of interest and events that would certainly help in raising the visibility of the International Year nationally. These events can be grouped as follows:

(a) Conferences, workshops and seminars (academic lectures, scientific meetings, press conferences);

(b) Cultural events (museum exhibitions, musical events, film festivals);

(c) Awareness-raising activities (production of materials, commemorative coins and stamps, organization of campaigns and competitions).

32. A compilation of these activities, together with their scheduled timing, will be made available online to facilitate the exchange of information among countries and allow for replication.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

33. A large number of partners have already confirmed their willingness to extend their cooperation and partnership for the successful celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification.

34. At the international level, and through the active involvement of those agencies identified by resolution 58/211 as well as the other international institutions active in the Convention implementation process, a promising tentative schedule of activities has been agreed upon. At the national level, after a period of consultations and information, encouraging feedback has started to reach the Convention secretariat, with several countries indicating their interest in playing an important role in the celebration of the Year.

35. However, more active support and a more timely response from the States parties would be highly appreciated, given the limited time available. Furthermore, due to the additional workload generated by the organization of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, all estimated additional costs required for the coordination and celebration of the Year have been proposed as extrabudgetary activities and accordingly included in the supplementary fund document of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (ICCD/COP(7)/2.Add.2).

36. The General Assembly may wish therefore to encourage States parties to contribute to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Special Fund in order to ensure the fulfilment of resolution 58/211.

Annex

Tentative list of activities envisaged for the celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

2005

October	– COP 7
	– Organization of side event on the International Year of Deserts and Desertification
October/November	– Presentation of report of the Secretary-General on the status of preparation for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification
	– Briefing of the regional groups of the United Nations
	– Organization of side event on the International Year of Deserts and Desertification
	– Joint reception in the Delegates' Dining Room
November	Organization of a special trip for international journalists to the Sahara region as prelude to a series of articles on the International Year of Deserts and Desertification
November/December	– Editing and printing of specialized publications on the International Year of Deserts and Desertification
	– Production of memorabilia articles for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

2006

January	– Launching of the programme of celebration of the Year in each country.
	– Launching of national commemorative stamps
January/February	Production of advertising inserts and television commercials.
February	Assessment and review of implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification at the global level. Event: Global meeting. Location: Argentina.
February	Youth and the Environment: Lessons and Perspectives in Africa. Africa meeting. Mali.
March	Launching of specialized training seminars on environmental journalism.
April	Women and Desertification. Assessing the role of women in the implementation of the Convention. Event: Global meeting. Location: China.

May	Launching in Rome of the film festival Desert Nights
June (early)	– High-level conference in Algiers on the protection of deserts and combating desertification – Inauguration of the Observatoire de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre la Désertification of the museum of the Institut international des déserts in Ghardaïa, Algeria
5 June	Celebration of World Environment Day
17 June	World Day to Combat Desertification: major media event, organized in Algiers with the presence of Kofi Annan and Wangari Mathai
June (end)	UNESCO conference, The Future of Arid Lands
September	Launching of the cultural exposition Drylands 2006 at the Kunst Halle Museum in Bonn
October	Presentation of the report to the Secretary-General in the General Assembly by Cherif Rahmani and Wangari Mathai

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Item 67 of the provisional agenda*
Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Report of the Secretary-General on measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Summary

The present report responds to General Assembly resolution 59/168. It reviews steps taken by the Assembly and its Committees during its fifty-ninth session to promote the achievement of gender equality through the gender mainstreaming strategy. The report reviews outcomes of major events during the past year and assesses the extent to which the reports of the Secretary-General and the resolutions of the Assembly have taken into account gender perspectives and made specific recommendations for action, in particular in relation to follow-up to major summits and conferences, including the United Nations Millennium Summit. The report also assesses gender perspectives in the preparations for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, which is to be held in Tunis in November 2005.

* A/60/150.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 59/168, requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women on the follow-up to and progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and on the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly, with an assessment of progress made in mainstreaming a gender perspective within the United Nations system and to recommend further measures and strategies for future action within the United Nations system. The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

2. A report of the Secretary-General entitled "Measures taken and progress achieved in the follow-up to and implementation of the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, with an assessment of progress made on mainstreaming a gender perspective within the United Nations system" (E/CN.6/2005/3), which focused on good practices and lessons learned, was submitted to the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. A report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to and progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (E/2005/54), which focused on gender mainstreaming action plans of United Nations entities, was submitted to the Economic and Social Council.

3. The present report reviews steps taken by the General Assembly and its Committees during its fifty-ninth session to promote the achievement of gender equality through the gender-mainstreaming strategy. The report reviews outcomes of major events during the past year and assesses the extent to which General Assembly resolutions and selected reports of the Secretary-General have taken into account gender perspectives and made specific recommendations for action, in particular in relation to follow-up to major summits and conferences, including the United Nations Millennium Summit. The report also assesses attention to gender perspectives in preparation for the forthcoming second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society to be held in Tunis in 2005, in response to paragraph 33 of resolution 59/168, in which the Assembly encouraged Governments and all other stakeholders to integrate a gender perspective into the preparatory processes and outcome documents, taking into account the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session in 2003.

II. General Assembly

A. International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

4. The Mauritius Declaration[1] adopted at the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Port Louis, Mauritius, from 10 to 14 January 2005, recognized that women play a key role in promoting

sustainable development activities in small island developing States and encouraged them in their efforts. The main outcome document of the meeting, the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,[2] considered gender equality as a basis for sustainable development and essential in the context of a national enabling environment. The Strategy reaffirmed gender equality and promoting the full and equal access of women and men to political participation, economic opportunity, health-care services and programmes and decision-making systems for sustainable development and the full and equal access of girls and boys, and women and men to all levels of education. The Strategy stressed that further action is required by small island developing States, with the necessary support of the international community, to further education for sustainable development through promoting comprehensive and accessible universal primary education and ensuring gender equality, assisting with basic infrastructure, curriculum development and teacher training, and working towards an integrated gender perspective.

B. World Conference on Disaster Reduction

5. The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005, reaffirmed that a gender perspective should be integrated into all disaster risk management policies, plans and decision-making processes, including those related to risk assessment, early warning, information management and education and training. The Framework for Action listed among key activities the development of early warning systems that are people centred and take into account the demographic, gender, cultural and livelihood characteristics of the target audiences. The Framework for Action also suggested as a key activity that equal access to appropriate training and educational opportunities for women be ensured and that gender and cultural sensitivity training be promoted as integral components of education and training for disaster risk reduction.

C. Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

6. The Bangkok Declaration on Crime and Justice, Synergies and Responses, adopted by the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Bangkok, from 18 to 25 April 2005,[3] referred to gender perspectives in the context of juvenile justice only. States agreed to consider ways to ensure the provision of services to children and also to ensure that those services take into account their gender, social circumstances and developmental needs. The Declaration stressed the need to combat trafficking in persons but did not make specific references to the gender perspectives of this phenomenon.

7. The documentation for the Congress included numerous references to gender perspectives that were not reflected in the outcome of the Congress, including on trafficking and violence against women. The report of the Secretary-General on the state of crime and criminal justice worldwide (A/CONF.203/3) noted concern about the reliability of the estimate figure relating to trafficked women. The report

also noted the high risk of rape for women and differences in regional statistics on rape. The results of the International Violence against Women Survey were expected to be made available in 2005. The report of the Secretary-General on preparations for the Congress (A/59/123-E/2004/90) included references to proposals made by regional preparatory processes for the inclusion of gender perspectives in the work programme of the Congress.

8. The working paper prepared by the Secretariat on effective measures to combat transnational organized crime (A/CONF.2003/4) referred to the significance of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, including its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The paper suggested that it would be important to incorporate combating organized crime into the work of the United Nations in post-conflict and peacebuilding operations and to collaborate in preventing and combating trafficking in persons, especially women and children, to and from conflict and post-conflict zones. The working paper of the Secretariat on making standards work (A/CONF.2003/8) referred to technical assistance, including in relation to gender issues, in particular in connection with peacekeeping operations and post-conflict situations. It suggested a new approach to implementation, focusing on witnesses and victims of crime, including the special needs of women in the criminal justice system.

D. High-level Meeting of the General Assembly to review the progress achieved in realizing the commitments set out in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS

9. The note by the President of the General Assembly on the High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS (A/59/852) transmitted the summaries of five round tables. One of the round tables focused on human rights and gender and resulted in a number of key recommendations, including the need for: (a) applying a human rights framework and the integration of gender equality concerns in order to reduce vulnerability to infection, advance prevention goals, ensure equal access to treatment, care and support and mitigate social and economic impacts of HIV/AIDS; (b) enacting, strengthening and enforcing national legislation to protect the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS and all vulnerable and displaced populations; (c) upholding and protecting the human rights of people living with HIV/AIDS and women, including confidentiality and equal protection under the law, sexual and reproductive rights and rights to health, housing, education and employment; (d) strengthening of mechanisms for monitoring of national compliance with the human rights components of the Declaration of Commitment to protect the rights of people affected by HIV; and utilizing other international frameworks such as the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to accelerate the response to AIDS.

10. The summary of the round table on prevention highlighted that an inclusive process was essential and required reaching out, inter alia, to women and, in particular, to young girls. Prevention efforts must include improving access of women and girls to education, developing gender-sensitive interventions, ensuring equal access for women and girls to health care and services, promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights, protection from gender-

based violence and greater access to female-controlled prevention methods. The summary of the round table on treatment, care and support suggested that action is needed to reduce the continuing impact of stigma and discrimination in limiting access to prevention and treatment for those who may need it most, including women. Systems to record and monitor the access to treatment and prevention services by women, girls, children and vulnerable populations, including through sex-disaggregated data, should be strengthened.

E. Implementation of and follow-up to major international conferences and summits, including follow-up to the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals

11. In General Assembly resolution 59/177 on global efforts for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the Assembly stressed the responsibility of States to mainstream a gender perspective in the design and development of prevention, education and protection measures. It also called upon all States to formulate and implement without delay policies and plans of action to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including their gender-based manifestations. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/375) included references to action in relation to gender equality and racism.

12. General Assembly resolution 59/146 on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly reaffirmed the commitment to gender equality and to strengthening policies and programmes that improve, ensure and broaden the full participation of women in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life and to improving their access to all resources. It reaffirmed that education, employment creation and improvement in working conditions are some of the indispensable elements of poverty eradication, social integration, gender equality and overall development and underlined the responsibility of the private sector regarding not only the economic and financial, but also the development, social, gender and environmental implications of their activities.

13. General Assembly resolution 59/239 on the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) encouraged Governments and UN-Habitat to continue to promote partnerships with local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and others, including women's groups, in order to empower them to play a more effective role in the provision of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlement development in an urbanizing world. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/198) included references to successful partnerships with women's group and to gender mainstreaming activities.

14. General Assembly resolution 59/150 on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing recommended that the Commission on the Status of Women continue to consider the situation of older women, including those living in rural areas. This recommendation corresponded to a recommendation contained in the relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/164). The report contained further

analysis of attention given to the situation of older women and gender perspectives of ageing by intergovernmental bodies or other United Nations entities.

15. A number of reports included attention to gender perspectives that were not reflected in the relevant General Assembly resolutions 59/220, 59/225 and 59/244. The reports included the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (A/59/94-E/2004/77), his report on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/59/220), and his report on follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/59/270).

16. The report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the United Nations special session on children (A/59/274) included attention to the situation of girls but made no specific action-oriented recommendations.

Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals

17. In its resolution 59/168, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to integrate gender perspectives in his preparations, including reports, for the review of the Millennium Declaration. It also requested the Secretary-General to include in his report on the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration an assessment of the progress made in promoting the goal of gender equality, in particular in relation to the development goals set forth in the Millennium Declaration.

18. In his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration (A/59/282 and Corr.1) the Secretary-General noted, in relation to goal 3 on gender equality and empowerment of women, that the target of achieving parity between girls and boys in primary and secondary education by 2005 was being met in most regions, except sub-Saharan Africa and Southern and Western Asia. However, progress as measured by other indicators, inter alia, the share of seats in parliaments and non-agricultural employment rates, lagged behind.

19. In his report on follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General noted the challenges to the achievement of development across interrelated issues such as gender equality, health, education and the environment and the fact that the goal of gender equality remains unfulfilled. The report also stated that about three quarters of the world's AIDS deaths every year occur in Africa, with women being the most affected. The report recommended that at the 2005 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly in September 2005, the Assembly reaffirm gender equality and the need to overcome pervasive gender bias by increasing primary school completion and secondary school access for girls, ensuring secure tenure of property to women, ensuring access to reproductive health services, promoting equal access to labour markets, providing opportunity for greater representation in government decision-making bodies, and supporting direct intervention to protect women from violence.

20. In a note to the General Assembly on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, the Secretary-General transmitted the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565 and Corr.1). The report addressed the situation of women in its analysis and recommended that, in the

restructuring of the Organization, attention should be paid to the need for greater consultation with and involvement in peace processes of important voices from civil society, especially those of women. It also called upon Member States to sign, ratify and implement the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The report called upon the Security Council, United Nations agencies and Member States to fully implement the recommendations contained in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

21. The Secretary-General transmitted to the General Assembly the overview of the final report of the Millennium Project (A/59/727), which stated that reducing gender inequality is essential for reducing hunger, containing HIV/AIDS, promoting environmental sustainability, upgrading slums and reducing child and infant mortality. The report expressed concern about gender bias in public investment and social and economic policies and suggested the promotion of overlooked priorities, including maternal health, gender equality and reproductive health. Women's participation was vital, as was support for capacity-building, including of women's organizations, as well as the training of community development agents to promote local participation and gender equality. Specific interventions to address gender inequality should be an intrinsic part of all investment packages based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and should address systemic challenges such as protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights, equal access to economic assets such as land and housing, increased primary school completion and expanded access to postprimary education for girls, equal labour market opportunities, freedom from violence and increased representation at all levels of governance. Among a number of "quick-wins" to achieve accelerated implementation of the MDGs, the overview proposed reforming and enforcing legislation guaranteeing women and girls property and inheritance rights, supporting breastfeeding and nutrition programmes for women launching national campaigns to reduce violence against women, and empowering women to play a central role in formulating and monitoring MDG-based poverty reduction strategies and other critical policy reform processes, in particular at the local government level.

22. The report was complemented by a report of the Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, in which specific action to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women was proposed.

F. Main Committees of the General Assembly

23. This section presents an overview of General Assembly resolutions and selected reports of the Secretary-General, other than those in section E above, that included specific recommendations for action on gender equality and the advancement of women. The section does not cover resolutions or reports that addressed the issue of gender balance in the United Nations system.

24. The Main Committees and the plenary of the General Assembly failed to incorporate gender perspectives into their resolutions, although the Third and Second Committees paid more attention to gender equality and the advancement of women, including through specific recommendations for action. Some resolutions adopted by the Assembly following the recommendations of the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Committees included specific proposals for action. The reports of the

Secretary-General for all Committees, in particular for the Third and Second Committees, incorporated gender perspectives, including specific recommendations for action, but these were not consistently reflected in the resolutions adopted by the Assembly.

1. First Committee: disarmament and international security

25. Gender perspectives were included in the preamble of General Assembly resolution 59/99 on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The resolution welcomed the fact that the Secretary-General's report (A/59/157) had highlighted the increased emphasis given by the Regional Centre to the inclusion of a gender perspective in its planned activities and the relationship between disarmament and development.

26. The report of the Secretary-General on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects (A/59/181) included references to the need for gender-sensitive research and the inclusion of women in relevant programmes, although no specific proposals for action were made. General Assembly resolution 59/86 of 3 December 2004 on the subject did not make reference to gender perspectives.

2. Second Committee: economic and financial

Women in development

27. The Second Committee addressed the agenda item on the role of women in development on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General providing a summary of the fourth *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* and its addendum on women and international migration (A/59/287 and Add.1). In its resolution 59/248 on the *World Survey*, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to update it for consideration by the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session and noted that it should continue to focus on selected emerging development themes that have an impact on the role of women in the economy.

Other issues

28. The General Assembly adopted several resolutions submitted by the Second Committee that provided specific recommendations for action on gender equality and the advancement of women in the fields of poverty eradication, migration, the international financial system and development, commodities, humanitarian assistance and the role of the United Nations system in development.

29. In its resolution 59/247 on the implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006), the General Assembly invited Member States to consider undertaking policies to facilitate the expansion of microfinance and microcredit institutions, reaffirmed that the eradication of poverty should be addressed in an integrated way, taking into account the importance of the need for the empowerment of women, and encouraged the use of gender analysis as a tool for the integration of a gender dimension into planning the implementation of policies, strategies and programmes for the eradication of poverty. The Assembly also recognized that urgent action is needed to address gender inequality and economic dependency and poverty in the context of HIV/AIDS. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/326) gave some attention to gender perspectives, although not in the recommendations.

30. In its resolution 59/241 on international migration and development, the General Assembly called upon all relevant bodies to continue to address the issue with a view to integrating migration issues, including a gender perspective and cultural diversity. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/325) stressed activities in relation to migrant women.

31. In its resolution 59/222 on the international financial system and development, the General Assembly called for the continued effort of the multilateral financial institutions in providing policy advice, technical assistance and financial support to member countries, to minimize the negative impacts of the adjustment programmes on the vulnerable segments of society, while taking into account the importance of gender-sensitive employment and poverty eradication policies and strategies. In its resolution 59/224 on commodities the Assembly invited all relevant stakeholders to develop strong producer associations for commodities with an appropriate role for producers, including women. The relevant report of the Secretary-General on world commodity trends and prospects (A/59/304) included a reference to women farmers.

32. In relation to special economic assistance to individual countries, in its resolution 59/215 on humanitarian and special assistance to Serbia and Montenegro, the General Assembly called upon relevant bodies to continue to provide assistance to alleviate the needs of refugees and internally displaced persons, bearing in mind the special situation of women. The report of the Secretary-General on humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation for countries and regions (A/59/293) included references to the gender dimensions of the conflict in Liberia.

33. In two of its resolutions addressing the role of the United Nations system, the General Assembly made specific proposals for action on gender equality. In its resolution 59/250 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, which contained a section on gender issues, the General Assembly, inter alia: encouraged the governing bodies of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into all aspects of their monitoring functions in relation to policies and strategies, medium-term plans, multi-year funding frameworks and operational activities; called upon all organizations of the United Nations system to mainstream a gender perspective and to pursue gender equality in their country programmes, planning instruments and sector-wide programmes and to articulate specific country-level goals; urged all organizations to provide gender specialist resources in support of gender mainstreaming, working closely with national counterparts in generating the disaggregated information required to produce better analysis; and requested all entities of the United Nations system to enhance the effectiveness of gender specialist resources, gender focal points and gender theme groups. The relevant reports of the Secretary-General on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/59/387 and A/59/85-E/2004/68) included the above-mentioned recommendations and concluded that accountability for gender mainstreaming and its results remains weak; that there are gaps in sex-disaggregated data and analytical capacities; and that monitoring mechanisms are still inadequate.

34. In its resolution 59/240 on the role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence, the General Assembly urged all Governments to ensure women's equal rights with men and their full and equal access to, inter alia, financial resources, including credit, in

particular for rural women and women in the informal sector, and to facilitate, where appropriate, the transition of women from the informal to the formal sector.

35. Some resolutions incorporated extensive analysis of gender perspectives without providing recommendations for action. In its resolution 59/246 on the role of microcredit and microfinance in the eradication of poverty, the General Assembly recognized that microcredit and microfinance programmes have led to the growing participation of women in the mainstream economic and political processes of society, as well as the need to create inclusive financial sectors in order to facilitate access for people living in poverty, especially women, to microcredit and microfinance. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/326 and Add.1) included an extensive analytical section on the gender dimensions of microcredit for the eradication of poverty. In its resolution 59/231 on the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the Assembly recognized the importance of integrating a gender perspective as well as of engaging women in the design and implementation of all phases of disaster management. In its resolution 59/249 on industrial development cooperation, the Assembly reaffirmed that industrialization is an essential factor in the integration of women into the development process. The note of the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) included some references to the advancement of women in relation to economic empowerment and entrepreneurship.

3. Third Committee: social, humanitarian and cultural

36. The General Assembly adopted a number of resolutions proposed by the Third Committee that addressed: gender perspectives in relation to the areas of social development; crime prevention and criminal justice; international drug control; refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions; promotion and protection of the rights of children; elimination of racism and racial discrimination; and human rights. Several of these resolutions provided specific recommendations for action on gender equality or the advancement of women.

Advancement of women

37. The Third Committee devoted two agenda items to gender equality issues: one on the advancement of women and another on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Assembly adopted four substantive resolutions proposed by the Third Committee: resolution 59/165 on working towards the elimination of crimes against women and girls committed in the name of honour; resolution 59/166 on trafficking in women and girls; resolution 59/167 on the elimination of all forms of violence against women, including crimes identified in the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly; resolution 59/168 on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The Assembly also adopted resolution 59/260 on the future operation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

38. Reports that focused specifically on gender equality and the advancement of women included: the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/59/38); the reports of the Secretary-General on violence against women (A/59/281); on trafficking in women and girls (A/59/185 and Corr.1); on

measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third session of the General Assembly (A/59/214); on the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system (A/59/357); on the future operation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (A/59/313); and the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (A/59/135 and Corr.1).

Human rights

39. The General Assembly addressed the gender perspectives of human rights in a number of substantive resolutions on thematic issues, some of which included specific recommendations for action. Other resolutions that contained specific proposals for action dealt with country situations, international human rights instruments and the work of human rights mechanisms, such as treaty bodies and special rapporteurs.

40. In its resolution 59/202 on the right to food, the General Assembly encouraged all States to take action to address discrimination against women, particularly where it contributes to the malnutrition of women and girls, including measures to ensure the realization of the right to food and ensuring that women have equal access to resources, including income, land and water, to enable them to feed themselves. In its resolution 59/182 on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the Assembly urged Governments to take effective measures to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including their gender-based manifestations, and invited States parties to the Convention against Torture to incorporate a gender perspective and information concerning children and juveniles when submitting reports to the Committee against Torture. The report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (A/59/324) included an analysis of sexual violence as torture. These above-mentioned resolutions encouraged the respective Special Rapporteurs to continue mainstreaming gender perspectives. In its resolution 59/176 on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Assembly encouraged States parties to continue to include a gender perspective in their reports and invited the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to take into account a gender perspective in the implementation of its mandate.

41. In its resolution 59/194 on the protection of migrants, the General Assembly requested all Member States effectively to promote and protect the human rights of all migrants, in conformity with, inter alia, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. States, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, were encouraged to undertake information campaigns aimed at clarifying opportunities, limitations and rights in the event of migration so as to enable everyone, in particular women, to make informed decisions and to prevent them from becoming victims of trafficking. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/328) included some information on migrant women and recommended that the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants be encouraged to continue addressing the situation of migrant women.

42. In its resolution 59/197 on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the General Assembly encouraged Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to include a gender perspective in training or educating military forces, law enforcement officers and government officials in human rights and humanitarian law issues. The relevant interim report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (A/59/319) included an analytical section on violations of the right to life of women.

43. In its resolution 59/199 on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance, the General Assembly reaffirmed the call for all Governments to take all appropriate measures to counter intolerance and related violence based on religion or belief, including practices of discrimination against women. In the same resolution, the Assembly urged States to devote particular attention to combating all practices motivated by religion or belief that lead to human rights violations and to discrimination against women. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/366) included some attention to the gender perspectives of religious intolerance.

44. In its resolution 59/188 on human rights and unilateral coercive measures, the General Assembly urged all States to take steps to avoid and to refrain from adopting any unilateral measures that impede the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected countries, in particular children and women. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/436) noted that the most vulnerable groups, including women, are among the primary victims of such measures.

45. The General Assembly made specific recommendations for improving the situation of women and girls in relation to a number of country situations. Some reports provided relevant background information. For example, in its resolution 59/205 on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Assembly expressed its serious concern at the systemic discrimination against women and girls in law and in practice and called upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to abide by its obligations under international human rights instruments. In its resolution 59/207 on the situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Assembly urged all parties to the conflict to take special measures to protect women and children from sexual violence, to promote the full enjoyment of all human rights by women and children and to meet the special needs of women and girls in post-conflict reconstruction, as well as to ensure the full participation of women in all aspects of conflict resolution and peace processes, including peacekeeping, conflict management and peacebuilding, and called upon the Government of National Unity to continue its programme to demobilize, disarm and reintegrate former combatants, taking into account the special needs of women and children, including girls, associated with those combatants. In its resolution 59/263 on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, the Assembly called upon the Government of Myanmar to end systematic violations of human rights, including the use of rape and other forms of sexual violence persistently carried out by members of the armed forces, as well as discrimination and violations suffered in particular by persons belonging to ethnic minorities, women and children. The report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on assistance to Sierra Leone in the field of human rights (A/59/340) included a section on gender-based violence and women's rights and recommended support for the work of the Government in the review of the status of women in Sierra Leone through funding, capacity-building and technical assistance from the international community.

46. A few resolutions acknowledged linkages between substantive human rights issues but did not make specific recommendations for action, including resolution 59/185 on the right to development and resolution 59/195 on human rights and terrorism. The report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of the programme of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004) (A/59/277) included some attention to the situation of indigenous women but in its resolution 59/174, the General Assembly did not make action-oriented recommendations in this field.

47. The report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people (A/59/258) included a section on indigenous women and girls and recommended that Governments should act in consultation with indigenous women to formulate and adopt specific measures and programmes to benefit such women and their families. The report of the Secretary-General on globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights (A/59/320) also included an analysis of the impact of globalization on women. The report of the special representative on human rights defenders (A/59/401) discussed discrimination against women human rights defenders. The report of the Secretary-General on strengthening of the rule of law (A/59/402) provided information on activities in the field of gender equality. The report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (A/59/422) included attention to gender perspectives in relation to indigenous women and sexual and reproductive rights.

Other issues

48. Resolution 59/261 on the rights of the child contained a section on the girl child and made a number of recommendations for action. In the resolution, the General Assembly underlined the need to mainstream a gender perspective in all policies and programmes relating to children, encouraged States to strengthen their statistical capacities and to use sex-disaggregated statistics, requested the United Nations system to incorporate a strong child rights perspective as well as a gender perspective throughout all activities and called upon all States to ensure that children benefit from education programmes, materials and activities reflecting the values of peace, non-violence, tolerance and gender equality. In the same resolution, the Assembly called upon all States to take all necessary measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by girls of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, to take effective actions against violations of those rights and freedoms and to base programmes and policies on the rights of the child, taking into account the special situation of girls. The Assembly also called upon all States to eliminate all forms of discrimination against girls and all forms of violence by enacting and enforcing legislation and formulating plans, programmes or strategies to protect girls, to consider ratifying or acceding to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and to implement effective measures for rehabilitation, physical and psychological recovery and reintegration into society, taking into account the rights and the specific needs and capacities of girls.

49. In its resolution 59/171 on the new international humanitarian order, the General Assembly recommended specific action by inviting States to promote a culture of protection, taking into account the particular needs of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities. In its resolution 59/172 on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa, the Assembly recognized that, among refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons, women and children are

the majority of the population affected by conflict and bear the brunt of atrocities and other consequences of conflict. In the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report on the causes of conflict and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/59/285), the need to eliminate gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination against women was noted. In its relevant resolution 59/255, the Assembly did not propose specific action but referred to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

50. The linkages between crime prevention and criminal justice and gender equality were acknowledged in some resolutions. In its resolution 59/163 on international cooperation against the world drug problem, the General Assembly reaffirmed that cooperation is needed to counter the challenges and threats posed by the continuing links between illicit drug trafficking and terrorism and other criminal activities, such as trafficking in human beings, including women and children. In its resolutions 59/157 on international cooperation in the fight against transnational organized crime: assistance to States in capacity-building with a view to facilitating the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto and 59/159 on strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity, the Assembly welcomed the entry into force of the Convention and its Protocol. The latter resolution recommended specific action by requesting that a gender perspective continue to be integrated into all activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/205) included attention to gender perspectives in relation to trafficking, penitentiary reform and victim support and recommended further action on trafficking. The report of the Secretary-General on the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (A/59/175) included references to programmes aimed at the elimination of trafficking in women and children. It recommended, inter alia, that the Institute continue to focus on these programmes. In its resolution 59/158, the Assembly did not make reference to gender issues.

51. In its resolution 59/149 on the United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all, the General Assembly recommended specific action by requesting all relevant entities of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in cooperation with national Governments, to take steps to address the needs of countries with large populations of illiterate adults, with particular regard to women. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/267) included extensive attention to the gender dimensions of illiteracy and recommended action in this regard.

52. In its resolution 59/147 on the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond, the General Assembly did not make specific recommendations for action on gender equality. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/176) provided some analysis of gender perspectives in relation to family policy, caregiving, community issues and domestic violence.

4. Fourth Committee: special political and decolonization

53. The General Assembly addressed gender issues in its resolution 59/300 on a comprehensive review of a strategy to eliminate future sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations recommended for adoption by the Fourth Committee. Without specifically mentioning gender perspectives of sexual exploitation and abuse, the resolution urged Member States, the Secretariat and

relevant United Nations organs to take all necessary steps to implement the proposals, recommendations and conclusions of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and requested the Secretary-General to provide a progress report.

5. Fifth Committee: administrative and budgetary

54. Only one of several resolutions on financing of peacekeeping missions recommended action on gender equality. In its resolution 59/285 on financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to include in the proposed budget for the Mission for the period from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006 the resources necessary to ensure the integration of gender perspectives into the entire electoral process. The revised budget for the mission for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 (A/59/707) provided for an additional Gender Affairs Officer to facilitate the integration of gender perspectives into the entire electoral process.

55. In his report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/59/608 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General noted the reinforcement of the gender mainstreaming capacity of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and in peacekeeping missions through the appointment of gender advisers and training in gender equality and women's rights. The report also pointed out the enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity, including through a focus on gender equality.

56. In its resolution 59/266 on human resources management, the General Assembly made specific requests and recommendations for action with regard to the advancement of women in relation to human resources. The requests related largely to the issue of gender balance but also included a request to clarify the role of departmental focal points on women.

6. Sixth Committee: legal

57. The only resolution adopted by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Sixth Committee that referred to gender perspectives was resolution 59/280 on the United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning, in which the Assembly called upon Member States to take measures to prevent the exploitation of women in the application of life sciences.

7. Resolutions adopted without reference to a Main Committee

58. General Assembly resolutions adopted without reference to a Main Committee that made specific recommendations on gender equality addressed areas of humanitarian assistance, including in relation to: Afghanistan; African development; peace culture, cultural understanding and sport; oceans and the law of the sea; and cooperation between the United Nations and other organizations.

59. In its resolution 59/141 on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, the General Assembly invited States to promote a culture of protection, taking into account the particular needs of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities. In his report on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/59/93-E/2004/74), the Secretary-General recommended that humanitarian organizations should strengthen their efforts to integrate a gender

perspective into the planning, programming and implementation of humanitarian activities.

60. In its resolution 59/112 on emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan and the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, the General Assembly called for voter and civic education, with a particular focus on women, and for full implementation of the human rights provisions of the new Afghan Constitution regarding the full enjoyment by women of their human rights. The Assembly emphasized the necessity of investigating allegations of violations committed against women and girls and reiterated the continued importance of the full and equal participation of women in all spheres of Afghan life. The Government was urged to actively involve women in the development and implementation of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes. Sex-disaggregated statistical data was called for to accurately track progress. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/581-S/2004/925) included a section on gender issues that analyses some of the current challenges, including maternal mortality, security issues, and restrictive cultural norms. At the same time, the report provides information on progress in the participation of women in public life.

61. The General Assembly recommended action on gender equality in three resolutions that dealt with a culture of peace and understanding, as well as sports as a means to achieve these goals. In its resolution 59/142 on the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation, the Assembly specifically encouraged Governments to apply a gender perspective while promoting, including through education, understanding, tolerance and friendship among human beings. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/201) mentioned gender perspectives in the context of the work of UNESCO. In its resolution 59/143 on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010, the Assembly encouraged relevant United Nations bodies to continue and further strengthen and expand their efforts, including in the field of gender equality. The relevant report of the Director-General of UNESCO (A/59/223) gave extensive attention to organizational activities to achieve gender equality. In its resolution 59/10 on sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace, the Assembly invited Governments, the United Nations and sport-related institutions to work collectively so that sport and physical education can promote a culture of peace and social and gender equality.

62. The General Assembly made specific recommendations for action in its resolution 59/254 on progress in implementation of and international support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and encouraged African countries to track progress in the full integration of women into African social, political and economic life. It also urged the Commission on the Status of Women to give prominence to NEPAD in future priority themes. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/206 and Corr.1) described the efforts of NEPAD to promote women's participation in its activities and in relation to gender mainstreaming.

63. Under the biannual agenda items on cooperation between the United Nations and other international organizations, in its resolution 59/9 on cooperation with the League of Arab States, the General Assembly called upon the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to increase their cooperation with the League of Arab States in its priority sectors, including the

empowerment of women. In its resolution 59/19 on cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Assembly encouraged the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to continue to cooperate closely in various fields, including on gender issues. In its resolution 59/257 on cooperation with the Organization of American States, the Assembly expressed appreciation to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for the initiatives to strengthen cooperation with inter-American institutions, including on women and development. The relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/59/303) discussed cooperation in the field of gender equality and the advancement of women.

G. Preparations for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, Tunis, 16 to 18 November 2005

64. The Declaration of Principles of the World Summit on the Information Society, adopted in Geneva on 12 December 2003,[4] committed Member States to ensuring that the information society enabled women's empowerment and their full participation in all spheres of society and decision-making processes as well as to mainstreaming gender perspectives and using information and communication technologies (ICT) as a tool to that end.

65. The second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society will be held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005. Two meetings of the Preparatory Committee were held in June 2004 and February 2005, respectively, with a third scheduled to take place in Geneva from 19 to 30 September 2005. The current proposed draft text was forwarded by the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee to the third meeting. It is divided into a political chapeau, the Tunis Commitment and operational parts, the Tunis Agenda for Action and the Tunis Plan of Implementation. One of the draft paragraphs of the Tunis Commitment recognizes that ICT could reinforce and increase existing social and economic divisions and widen the gap between individuals, including men and women. This proposed text is currently in square brackets. The language of one of several alternate paragraphs proposes that in striving to promote universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to ICT, special attention be paid to the role and needs of women and other groups in order to ensure that the benefits of the information society are more evenly distributed and to bridge the digital divide.

66. In its resolution 59/168, the General Assembly encouraged Governments and all other stakeholders to integrate a gender perspective into the preparatory processes and outcome documents, taking into account the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-eighth session in 2003. In view of the importance of ICT for development, including the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 8 on a global partnership for development, and the need to ensure gender mainstreaming in the follow-up to major conferences and summits, there is further scope for integrating gender perspectives in the proposed outcome document, for example, in relation to the need to overcome the gender digital divide, ensure financing mechanisms that guarantee women's equal access to and utilization of ICT, inclusive and participatory infrastructure development and women's full participation in all spheres of public life and decision-making, as well as in using ICT as a tool for such purposes. The Seoul-Gyeonggi Declaration on the Equal Participation of Women in the Information Society, adopted by the Forum on ICTS and Gender for the World Summit on the Information Society 2005, held in Seoul on 24 and 25 June 2005, made specific recommendations in respect of areas recognized as most critical, namely the development of sex-disaggregated statistics

and gender indicators; the integration of a gender perspective in national ICT policies and strategies; ensuring ICT training and capacity-building for women; promoting the economic empowerment of women; ensuring that women benefit from financing of ICT for development; and facilitating gender equality in Internet and ICT governance.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

67. **The gender-sensitive presentation of issues in documentation before the General Assembly facilitates gender-sensitive policy formulation. The Third and Second Committees have paid greater attention to gender perspectives than have the other Committees of the Assembly. Reports submitted to the various Committees during the period under review contained a certain degree of gender analysis but did not systematically include recommendations on further action. Resolutions did not always include an analysis of gender perspectives or recommendations for specific action on gender equality and the advancement of women. In those cases where resolutions recommended specific action, they tended to reflect proposals made in reports of the Secretary-General.**

68. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) **Request that gender perspectives, based on qualitative gender analysis and containing concrete recommendations for further action, are integrated in reports submitted to the Assembly and its subsidiary bodies;**

(b) **Call for greater attention to gender perspectives in resolutions adopted by its subsidiary bodies, in particular concrete recommendations for action aimed at achieving gender equality;**

(c) **Ensure follow-up on the implementation of these recommendations by requesting reporting on progress;**

(d) **Ensure the full integration of gender perspectives in the preparation for, implementation of and follow-up to the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society;**

(e) **Ensure gender mainstreaming in the implementation of and follow-up to other major international conferences and summits by its subsidiary bodies, in particular in the context of the 2005 World Summit.**

Notes

[1] Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritania, 10-14 January 2005 (United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] See A/CONF.203/16, annex.

[4] A/C.2/59/3, annex, chap. VII.

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Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Convention on Biological Diversity

Implementation of United Nations environmental conventions

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the reports submitted by the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

* A/60/150.

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Implementation of United Nations environmental conventions

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I. Report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention

A. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, by resolution 59/234 of 22 December 2004, invited the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[1] to report to it at its sixtieth session on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The present report is submitted in response to that invitation.

B. Outcome of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties

1. Summary

2. The Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (hereinafter referred to as the Conference) held its tenth session at Buenos Aires from 6 to 17 December 2004. The Conference gained political momentum from the imminent entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol,[2] which occurred on 16 February 2005. International cooperation for protection of the global climate has thus entered a new phase because, for the first time, industrialized countries who have ratified the Protocol have assumed quantified commitments to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The Conference adopted the Buenos Aires programme of work on adaptation and response measures. It further mainstreams adaptation into the climate negotiations. The Conference also completed unfinished business from the Marrakech Accords, relating to land use, land-use change and forestry issues.

3. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has reached near-universality with 189 parties, and the Kyoto Protocol has been ratified by 152 States (as at 22 July 2005).

2. Outcome of the tenth session

4. The formal decisions adopted by the Conference, some of which are noted below, will support measures to mitigate and to facilitate adaptation to climate change.

5. The Buenos Aires programme of work on adaptation and response measures provides for further scientific assessments of vulnerabilities and options for adaptation; further support to national adaptation programmes of action of least developed countries; workshops and technical papers on various aspects of climate change risk and adaptation; and support for mainstreaming adaptation into sustainable development planning. It focuses on several aspects of adaptation: the need for data from climate models; methodologies for vulnerability and assessment; and support for adaptation action resulting from national strategies and plans. The measures listed include urging industrialized countries to provide financial resources, improving information exchange and data availability, and advancing vulnerability studies and adaptation projects, as well as regular reporting by the Global Environment Facility on adaptation activities. In addition, three regional

workshops on adaptation and one expert meeting for small island developing States will be conducted before November 2007. Activities under a section of the plan on the impact of the implementation of response measures include conducting two expert meetings and reporting requirements. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice was requested to develop a structured five-year programme of work on the scientific, technical and socio-economic aspects of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. The Buenos Aires programme of work calls for an overall assessment at the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, in 2008, of adaptation activities conducted within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process.

6. The financial mechanism to provide funding for the above-mentioned activities includes the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund, and the forthcoming Adaptation Fund. Drafting of a decision to finance activities other than the preparation of national adaptation programmes of action through the Least Developed Countries Fund was not completed and a decision on guidance to the Special Climate Change Fund was deferred. Since the tenth session of the Conference, the Subsidiary Body for Implementation agreed on a draft decision on the Least Developed Countries Fund for adoption by the Conference at its eleventh session.

7. The Conference showed strong support for the clean development mechanism, a unique instrument that supports sustainable development projects in developing countries through private investment and technology transfer and helps industrialized countries, through the credits generated, to meet their emission reduction targets in a cost-effective manner. The clean development mechanism credits can eventually enter the emissions trading market, which started in the European Union on 1 January 2005. At the Conference, operational issues and efforts for expanding the scope and geographical spread of projects were discussed. The Conference opened the way for new types of clean development mechanism projects relating to small-scale forestry, thus adding to existing possibilities such as projects that produce power from renewable energy sources or from methane captured at landfills.

8. The implementation of the Convention continues with 123 out of 148 developing countries having submitted their initial national communication. A landmark was the presentation of the initial national communications of Brazil and China, which provide detailed accounts of the magnitudes and the sources of their greenhouse gas emissions, as well as of policies and measures taken by both countries. The submission of these documents is a signal of the continuing commitment of these countries to the climate regime.

9. Parties have reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the frameworks for capacity-building in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition, in order to facilitate the implementation of their commitments under the Convention.

10. The Conference decided to seek recommendations from the Expert Group on Technology Transfer, a body established under the Convention, for enhancing implementation of a framework for meaningful and effective actions to enhance the implementation of article 4, paragraph 5, of the Convention. As part of the Marrakech Accords, the framework contained a set of activities in five key subject areas; technology needs assessments, technology information, enabling

environments, capacity-building, and mechanisms for technology transfer. The recommendations of the Expert Group on Technology Transfer would provide inputs towards the review of the Expert Group by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth session, in 2006, including possible revision of key themes in the existing framework.

11. The Least Developed Countries Expert Group, which was established in the Marrakech Accords in 2001[3] to provide advice to the least developed countries on the preparation and implementation strategy of national adaptation programmes of action, was given a new mandate by the Conference to consider and subsequently report on the role of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group in support of the implementation of national adaptation programmes of action and also to provide information on the potential technical and financial difficulties that least developed country parties may have in implementing them.

12. The Conference encouraged parties to strengthen climate observations and to address the priorities identified in the Implementation Plan for the Global Observing System for Climate in support of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change prepared by the Global Climate Observing System and welcomed the emphasis given to enhancing the participation of developing countries in this effort.

13. The Conference reaffirmed that the five-year New Delhi work programme on article 6 of the Convention, which had been adopted at its eighth session, should continue to guide parties in implementing climate change education and outreach activities.

14. The high-level political debate during the Conference took place through four round-table discussions among ministers and other heads of delegation. Panel discussions, which were attended by 85 ministers, along with heads of delegation, focused on:

(a) "The Convention after 10 years: accomplishments and future challenges". Participants reflected on what they had achieved and not achieved, unanimously concluding that much more needed to be done if the objective of the Convention was to be attained. In that regard there was a call on parties to move forward on both adaptation and mitigation; the undeniable importance of both of which in addressing climate change and its effects was noted. Parties also noted the importance of scientific findings in supporting the process and the need for continued work in this area to further identify the degree and severity of climate change, and reduce existing uncertainties.

(b) "Impacts of climate change, adaptation measures and sustainable development". Speakers emphasized that it was important to enhance efforts to mainstream adaptation to climate change into the broader sustainable development agenda to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, as well as to benefit from synergy with other Rio conventions. It was noted that the scientific picture of climate change and its associated impacts at the regional and local levels was far from complete, and many countries agreed to address the information gaps and uncertainties. Speakers also stressed that the sufficient and timely availability of financial resources and relevant methodologies and technologies, including capacity-building, was of critical importance in that regard.

(c) "Technology and climate change". It was noted that relevant technologies were already available, for example in the area of energy efficiency and renewables; the challenge was to make those technologies available to all countries. It was also noted that innovative technologies, such as hydrogen-based technologies and capture and storage of carbon dioxide, had considerable potential to contribute to combating climate change. It was recognized that promotion of collaborative research and development projects and joint ventures between developed and developing countries would contribute to the dissemination of environmentally sustainable technologies. The participation of the private sector by means of an intelligent combination of regulation and incentives could be an important factor for the success of that effort, and it should be encouraged and supported by Governments. The importance of innovation and the search for market solutions was also stressed. An ideal cooperation model under the Convention should consist of building partnerships that brought together the skills, experiences and potentialities in developed and developing countries in a balanced and complementary manner. Capacity-building, institutional development and access to information were mentioned as key components of successful technology transfer initiatives, together with the creation of appropriate financing and development mechanisms.

(d) "Mitigation of climate change: policies and their impacts". There was a call for all countries to adopt novel approaches to mitigate climate change and to integrate climate change mitigation into the planning and decision-making process, while increasing economic efficiency, particularly in the energy and transport sectors. Those approaches could slow emission growth and decouple it from economic growth. They could achieve multiple co-benefits, such as energy security, improved local air quality, employment and reduced energy cost, and help to turn mitigation into a driver for economic growth, given the encouraging example of countries with economies in transition. It was noted that new and innovative mitigation policies and policy approaches were emerging, such as emissions trading and green investment schemes; they could play a central role in climate strategies and in enhancing the cost-effectiveness of those strategies. Those policies were becoming an integral part of a broader policy mix to control emissions from national economies. They were already helping a number of countries to become leaders in the emerging market of green technologies, to stimulate innovation and enhance competitiveness. Engaging the private sector, major stakeholders, all levels of government and citizens in the implementation of those strategies would ensure their continuity and ultimate success. Those strategies were seen by many parties as a key component for the development of comprehensive long-term strategies to achieve deeper cuts in emissions worldwide.

15. The Conference also agreed to organize a seminar to promote an informal exchange of information on actions relating to mitigation and adaptation to assist parties to continue to develop effective and appropriate responses to climate change, and policies and measures adopted by their respective Governments that support implementation of their existing commitments under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. This seminar was held in Bonn on 16 and 17 May 2005.

16. In addition to adopting formal decisions, the Conference has evolved into a global forum for businesses, environmental groups and others to exchange ideas, make contacts and present new reports and findings. Some 60 exhibits and more than 150 seminars and events were held on the sidelines of the intergovernmental talks.

17. The ongoing work of the liaison group of secretariats and officers of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity to promote complementarities among the three secretariats, has been continuing.

C. Conclusions and recommendations

18. The General Assembly may wish to, inter alia:

(a) Take note of the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as transmitted by the Secretary-General;

(b) Note the outcome of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, hosted by the Government of Argentina from 6 to 17 December 2004;

(c) Invite the Executive Secretary to continue to report to it on the work of the Conference.

Notes

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[2] FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.

[3] See FCCC/CP/2001/13/Add.1.

II. Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

A. Introduction

1. In its resolution 59/235 of 22 December 2004, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixtieth session on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.[1] The present report has been submitted in response to that request.

2. In the same resolution, the Assembly stressed the importance of the Convention for meeting the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and invited all Governments to take further measures to strengthen its implementation.

3. The General Assembly also invited the Global Environment Facility to strengthen the focal area of land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation. It invited the secretariat of the Global Environment Facility and the secretariat of the Convention to finalize the draft memorandum of understanding in an expeditious way and to submit it for the consideration of and adoption by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the Council of the Global Environment Facility.

4. The third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention was convened in Bonn, Germany from 2 to 11 May 2005. A number of important recommendations on the implementation of the Convention were adopted by the Committee, as possible decisions for the Conference of the Parties at its seventh session.

B. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 59/235

1. Contribution to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration

5. The implementation of resolution 59/235 took place in the context of the preparations for the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to review progress made in the fulfilment of the commitments contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The Assembly, in its resolution 59/235, invited the Secretary-General to give due consideration to the role and place of the Convention in ongoing work in the context of the preparations for the high-level plenary meeting, including the report of the United Nations Millennium Project. In this regard, it is expected that the high-level plenary meeting will call for strengthening of the implementation of the Convention, thus contributing to reaching the Millennium Development Goals, in particular as they relate to poverty and hunger.

6. In fact, the Convention constitutes an overarching framework for the international community's efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. By, in particular, combining responses to the sustainable livelihood needs of lower-income groups

and ecosystem protection, rehabilitation and restoration in drylands, implementation of the national action programmes on combating desertification/land degradation contributes to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the goals of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.[2]

2. Review of the implementation of the Convention and of its institutional arrangements, pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2 (a) and (b), and article 26 of the Convention: report on the third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

7. The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention as a standing subsidiary body was established by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth session to assist it in its function of regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention.

8. The third session of the Committee was convened in Bonn, Germany, from 2 to 11 May 2005. The meeting considered reports on the implementation of the Convention submitted by affected African parties, as well as relevant subregional and regional reports. It also considered the reports by developed country parties on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of the action programmes of affected African parties, including information on financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention, as well as information provided by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and by other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention.

9. The Committee reviewed available information regarding: the mobilization and use of financial resources and other support by multilateral agencies and institutions; necessary adjustments to the elaboration process and implementation of action programmes, including review of the enhanced implementation of the obligations under the Convention; ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer, as well as of promoting experience sharing and information exchange among parties and interested institutions and organizations; ways and means of improving procedures for the communication of information, as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties.

10. Two global interactive dialogues were convened: on the mainstreaming of national action programmes and their contribution to overall poverty eradication; and on land degradation/desertification and their impact on migration and conflicts.

11. The Committee discussed specific thematic issues pertaining to the implementation process in Africa, namely: participatory processes involving civil society and non-governmental and community-based organizations; legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements; resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including the conclusion of partnership agreements; linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies; measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought; drought and desertification monitoring and assessment; access by affected country parties, particularly affected developing country parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how.

12. A number of recommendations were made on major thematic issues such as: the participatory processes; legislative and institutional frameworks; the promotion of synergies; resource mobilization, including coordination and partnership agreements; rehabilitation of degraded lands; monitoring and assessment, including the improvement of the reporting process; awareness-raising, information and communication.

13. Other important decisions taken by the Committee included the consideration of thematic issues under a global review on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of the action programmes of affected country parties.

14. The Committee recommended the need for a review process and procedure for communication of information, as well as of the quality and format of reports, mainstreaming of national action programmes into national development frameworks, including poverty reduction strategy papers, for efficiency and effectiveness of measures in reaching the end-users of natural resources. The Committee also called for increased political commitment and awareness-raising, in particular in regard to the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006. It called on the General Assembly at its September 2005 high-level plenary meeting to underline the global magnitude of the issue of sustainable land management and combating desertification.

15. The session gave the opportunity to parties to participate in a number of interesting debates, triggered by high-quality presentations and experts' discussion. Progress was achieved in many fields that are of crucial importance to the future implementation of the Convention, including those of monitoring and assessment, local-level capacity-building and mainstreaming and partnership-building for the implementation of national action programmes. Many parties expressed their appreciation for the opportunity provided by the Committee session to review implementation and pursue at the same time a needed policy dialogue on related thematic and substantive issues.

16. At its seventh session, the Conference of the Parties will review the terms of reference of the Committee, its operations and its schedule of meetings, with a view to making any necessary modification, including reconsidering the need for and modalities of the Committee as a subsidiary body. This review will be based on considerations such as relevance, impact, effectiveness, appropriateness of format and cost-effectiveness. The seventh session of the Conference of the Parties is scheduled to take place in Nairobi from 17 to 28 October 2005.

17. The Committee also made recommendations on financing of the Convention implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions, including the Global Environment Facility.

3. Collaboration with the Global Environment Facility

18. At its fifty-ninth session, the General Assembly emphasized the need for the provision of adequate resources for the focal area of land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation, of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and in this respect invited the Facility to strengthen the focal area of land degradation.

19. The Assembly also invited the secretariat of GEF and the secretariat of the Convention to finalize the draft memorandum of understanding in an expeditious

way and to submit it for the consideration of and adoption by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the Council of GEF.

20. With regard to strengthening the focal area of land degradation, the Assembly may recall that further to the opening by GEF at its second Assembly of a new GEF focal area of land degradation, the Council of GEF approved in May 2003 a new operational programme on sustainable land management as a means of enhancing its support to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

21. Member States may also recall that the GEF operational programme on sustainable land management (operational programme 15) is meant to provide a framework for the development of activities eligible for GEF incremental financing to address the root causes and negative impacts of land degradation on ecosystem stability, functions and services, as well as on people's livelihoods and economic well-being, through sustainable land management practices.

22. The secretariat has pursued its collaboration with GEF and its implementing and executing agencies on the implementation of operational programme 15. Initiatives, partnerships and projects are being developed or implemented by the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) or GEF itself. The focal area of land degradation continues to receive a great deal of attention from the members of the GEF Council, including in the context of ongoing consultations on the fourth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund (GEF-4).

23. With regard to financial resources allocated to the focal area of land degradation, the GEF secretariat brought to the attention of the Council the fact that the response from countries in developing project proposals had been overwhelming, with the envelope for GEF-3 being oversubscribed at a very early stage. This demonstrated that the allocation of US$ 250 million was not commensurate with the requirements of the parties to cover the needs of the focal area in the GEF-3 cycle.

24. This situation will have to be taken into account in the course of ongoing consultations on GEF-4. At the last replenishment meeting, some Council members noted that resources available for the land degradation focal area were not sufficient to meet the demands of countries, and called for increased resources for the focal area in GEF-4.

25. With respect to working arrangements between the Convention secretariat and GEF, consultations have continued between the respective secretariats on the preparation of the draft memorandum of understanding called for by the Conference of the Parties. The document was introduced to the Council of GEF at its June 2005 session. The Council recognized the balance between the various interests that had been achieved in the draft memorandum of understanding.

26. Despite some differences of opinion concerning the title of the document on the part of some members, a decision on this matter was adopted by the Council. The Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of GEF was requested to transmit the draft memorandum of understanding to the Executive Secretary of the secretariat for submission to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh session with a view to its consideration and adoption in order to support collaboration, and implementation of

the Convention. The Council requested that, once approved by the Conference of the Parties, the memorandum of understanding should be submitted to it for approval.

4. Synergies with other relevant conventions and organizations

27. By decision 12/COP.6,[3] the Conference of the Parties reviewed activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies. In this regard, the work of the liaison group of secretariats and officers of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and the Convention on Biological Diversity to promote complementarities among the three secretariats has been continuing.

28. The secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification has continued to liaise with other relevant agencies and institutions. With the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the secretariat focused its action on low forest cover countries, with a view to having this special category benefit from the current or any other international arrangement on forests.

29. In the same vein, UNCCD has concluded a memorandum of understanding with UNDP as a strategic framework of cooperation aimed at achieving results and maximizing impacts in order to contribute to the progress of implementation of the Convention at the national level. The memorandum of understanding was signed on 20 October 2004.

C. Action requested of the General Assembly

30. The sixtieth session of the General Assembly is taking place at a time when the international community is assessing progress made in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Consistent with the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth session[2] and General Assembly resolution 59/235, stating that the Convention constitutes a major international instrument which can contribute to poverty eradication and help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, at its sixtieth session the Assembly may wish to recommit the international community to allocating more financial resources to rural development, in particular for the rehabilitation of degraded land where pockets of poverty are widespread.

31. The third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention extensively discussed the mobilization and use of financial resources and other support by multilateral agencies and institutions. The Assembly may wish to reiterate its invitation to United Nations funds and programmes, the Bretton Woods institutions, donor countries and other development agencies to increase their assistance to affected countries by making more resources available to them. It may also call for a robust fourth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund in order to increase substantially the level of resources allocated to the implementation of the Convention, in the light of the demonstrated need.

32. A number of parties have yet to pay their mandatory contributions to the core budget of the Convention. As it did last year, the General Assembly may wish to reiterate its appeal to the parties to pay those contributions to the core budget, which are due to be paid promptly every 1 January.

33. Further, in its resolution 56/196 of 21 December 2001, the General Assembly approved the continuation of the current institutional linkage and related administrative arrangements between the United Nations Secretariat and the secretariat of the Convention for a further five-year period, to be reviewed by the General Assembly and the Conference of the Parties not later than 31 December 2006. Since the institutional linkage has proved effective, the Assembly may wish to decide, with the concurrence of the Conference of the Parties, to extend it for another period of five years.

34. Likewise, in accordance with that institutional arrangement and in conformity with past practice, the General Assembly may also wish to take action to ensure that provision is made in the calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 2006-2007 for the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies that will take place during that period.

Notes

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

[2] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[3] See ICCD/COP(6)11/Add.1.

III. Report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

A. Introduction

1. In paragraph 12 of its resolution 59/236 of 22 December 2004, the General Assembly invited the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to continue reporting to it on the ongoing work regarding the Convention, including its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

2. Since the previous report of the Executive Secretary to the General Assembly (A/59/197, sect. III) several significant meetings have been held within the framework of the Convention and its Biosafety Protocol. These include the tenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), held in Bangkok from 7 to 11 February 2005; the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, held in Montreal from 30 May to 3 June 2005; the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas, held in Montecatini, Italy, from 13 to 17 June 2005; the third meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing, held in Bangkok from 14 to 18 February 2005; and the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Liability and Redress under the Biosafety Protocol, held in Montreal from 25 to 27 May 2005.

3. The reports of these meetings, together with lists of participants and pre-session documentation have been made available to all Governments and are available at the website of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (http://www.biodiv.org). Section B below provides an overview of the outcomes of these meetings, focusing on progress in the implementation of the decisions taken at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties and on the continuing effort to ensure the effective implementation of the Biosafety Protocol. Section C provides information on cooperation and on other activities and processes under the Convention of relevance to the work of the General Assembly. Section D provides recommendations for the consideration of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

4. As of 13 July 2005, there were 188 parties to the Convention and 124 parties to the Cartagena Protocol.

B. Overview of the outcomes of meetings held since the submission of the previous report

1. Outcome of the tenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice[1]

5. In accordance with the mandate provided by decision VII/31 of the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting, of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) developed a draft programme of work on island biodiversity, taking into account the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States; the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action; the Plan of

Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development; and the Millennium Development Goals, in particular goal 7.[2] The overall purpose of the programme of work on island biodiversity is the significant reduction of island biodiversity loss by 2010 and beyond, at the global, regional and national levels, through the implementation of the three main objectives of the Convention, for the benefit of all forms of life on islands and, in particular, as a contribution to poverty alleviation and the sustainable development of small island developing States. The draft programme of work contains goals, global targets and time frames and island-specific priority actions. SBSTTA recommends its adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting, to be held in March 2006.

6. Further to decision VII/6 of the Conference of the Parties, SBSTTA reviewed the draft findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, including the synthesis report on biodiversity, thereby providing an opportunity to delegations to provide comments for the consideration of the Panel and Board of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment in its finalization of the report.[3] At its eleventh meeting, scheduled to take place in November 2005, SBSTTA will consider the final products of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, including the synthesis report on biodiversity, with a view to making recommendations for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting concerning the implications of the findings of the Assessment for the future work of the Convention (see sect. III A below).

7. Further, SBSTTA developed a set of global outcome-oriented targets for the implementation of the programmes of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and marine and coastal biodiversity; indicators for assessing progress towards, and communicating, the 2010 biodiversity target at the global level; and an outline for the second Global Biodiversity Outlook (see sect. III B below).

2. The outcome of the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety[4]

8. The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety was attended by more than 600 delegates, representing 101 parties to the Protocol and 16 non-party States, as well as a total of 139 organizations, including United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and academic and industry groups. Building on the outcome of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, the meeting further developed the tools necessary for the effective implementation of the Protocol. It considered issues relating to the handling, transport, packaging and identification of living modified organisms, including documentation of living modified organisms intended for food, feed or processing; options for implementing notification requirements; risk assessment and risk management; socio-economic considerations; public awareness and participation; and liability and redress. It also addressed a number of standing issues: the report of the Compliance Committee, including its rules of procedure; operations and activities of the Biosafety Clearing-House; the status of capacity-building activities and use of the roster of experts, financial mechanisms and resources, and cooperation with other organizations.

9. Although the parties failed to reach consensus regarding documentation requirements for living modified organisms intended for direct use as food, or feed, or for processing as envisaged in article 18, paragraph 2 (a), of the Protocol, they further reinforced the documentation requirements adopted at their first meeting in decision BS-I/6 B relating to living modified organisms destined for contained use (article 18, paragraph 2 (b)) and for intentional introduction into the environment (article 18, paragraph 2 (c)).[5] In this respect, parties and other Governments were urged to comply fully with these requirements and to provide information to the Biosafety Clearing-House on domestic requirements regarding imports in general and documentation requirements in particular. It was decided that documentation requirements of article 18, paragraphs 2 (b) and (c), would be considered at the third meeting, in 2006, in the context of the review of implementation of the Protocol as provided for under its article 35, without prejudice to future consideration of a stand-alone document.

10. With regard to risk assessment and risk management, parties were encouraged to include in their interim reports information on experiences and progress in implementing risk assessment and risk management approaches. It was also decided to establish an ad hoc technical expert group on risk assessment to consider the nature and scope of existing risk assessment approaches; evaluate their relevance under the Protocol and identify gaps; and identify areas where capacity-building activities might be particularly important.[6]

11. Capacity-building in biosafety remains an important preoccupation for parties. In this regard, parties were reminded to submit to the Biosafety Clearing-House information on their capacity-building needs and priorities, and developed countries and relevant international organizations were invited to provide support for developing country parties, as well as for parties with economies in transition, in the field of capacity-building, in particular for the development and implementation of national biosafety frameworks.[7] The meeting underlined the imperative of prioritization of capacity-building needs; the development of national strategies for capacity-building in biosafety; the sustainability of capacity-building; and the promotion of regional and subregional initiatives and approaches to address common needs and priorities. Further, it adopted a process for the review and, if necessary, revision of the Action Plan for Building Capacities for the Effective Implementation of the Protocol adopted at the first meeting.

12. The parties to the Protocol also adopted decisions on international cooperation, exchange of information and public awareness and participation.[8] They requested the Executive Secretary to pursue efforts to obtain observer status for the secretariat with the World Trade Organization's committees on sanitary and phytosanitary measures and on technical barriers to trade; to reinforce cooperation with the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the Office International des Epizooties and the International Plant Protection Convention; and to establish cooperation with the World Customs Organization, the International Organization for Standardization, the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, the International Air Transport Association and other relevant customs and transport organizations where biosafety issues are considered. As part of efforts to implement article 23 of the Protocol, on public awareness and participation, the meeting encouraged parties to the Protocol and other States to seek and leverage opportunities for cooperation with other parties, other States and relevant international bodies at subregional, regional and international levels. It urged parties and other States to develop and

implement national programmes of public awareness, education and participation, including public access to information, concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms. The meeting encouraged use of the media and other specified Convention on Biological Diversity tools and programmes and United Nations initiatives. The parties also decided to consider and review progress on the implementation of article 23 at their fifth meeting.

13. In addition, the meeting invited parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations to: submit views on rights and obligations of transit States; exchange information on biosafety research; and submit views on establishing a permanent subsidiary body to provide scientific and technical advice.[9] It called on parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations to provide more emphasis to research on socio-economic impacts of living modified organisms and to share information on research methods and results regarding such socio-economic impacts. Parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations are required to provide their views and case studies concerning socio-economic impacts of living modified organisms in time for the fourth meeting of the parties.

14. Finally, the parties to the Protocol approved the rules of procedure of the Compliance Committee established at their first meeting, in February 2004, pursuant to article 34 of the Protocol.[10] The mandate of the Committee is to promote compliance with the provisions of the Protocol and to address cases of non-compliance.

3. The outcome of the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas

15. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas, which was established by the Conference of the Parties in its decision VII/28, met for the first time from 13 to 17 June in Montecatini, Italy. The main outcomes of this meeting included (i) the initiation of work to compile and synthesize existing ecological criteria for future identification of potential sites for protection in marine areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, as well as applicable biogeographical classification systems, and recommendations concerning cooperation and coordination among various forums for the establishment of marine protected areas; (ii) agreement on options for mobilizing financial resources for the implementation of the programme of work through a variety of funding mechanisms; (iii) requests for updating and making available the existing list of toolkits for implementing the programme of work on protected areas, and for developing further tools specific to national and regional conditions, including future capacity-building in the use of toolkits; and (iv) recommendations on the process, guidelines and mechanisms for monitoring progress in the implementation of programme of work on protected areas, as well as a schedule for this work.

16. The Working Group will continue its work to identify options for cooperation for the establishment of marine protected areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction at its second meeting in December 2005. The Working Group requested the Executive Secretary to transmit to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group established by paragraph 73 of General Assembly resolution 59/24 the outcomes of its work, for information.

4. Third meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-sharing

17. Pursuant to paragraph 44 (o) of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, subsequently reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its resolutions 57/260 of 20 December 2002 and 58/212 of 23 December 2003, the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting, in February 2004, mandated the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing to negotiate an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing. The third meeting of the Working Group was held in Bangkok from 14 to 18 February 2005.[11] The meeting undertook an initial review of the process, scope, nature, potential objectives and elements of an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing. It developed options on the scope, potential objectives and elements of the international regime and invited parties, Governments, indigenous and local communities, relevant international organizations and all relevant stakeholders to submit written comments and proposals thereon for consideration at its fourth meeting. The meeting also established a process for the identification of gaps within the existing international legal framework. The fourth meeting of the Working Group is scheduled to take place in February 2006 in Spain to continue with the negotiation process.

5. The first meeting of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Liability and Redress under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

18. At its first meeting, in February 2004, the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol established, by its decision BS-I/8, an Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Liability and Redress under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to carry out the process provided for under article 27 of the Protocol. The first meeting of the Working Group was held in Montreal, Canada, from 25 to 27 May 2005.[12] The Working Group reviewed information relating to liability and redress for damage resulting from transboundary movements of living modified organisms and developed options regarding the potential content of a liability and redress regime under the Protocol, including the option of no liability and redress instrument. Parties, Governments, relevant international organizations and stakeholders were invited to submit further views with respect to approaches, options and issues identified by the meeting for further consideration by the Working Group at its next meeting. At its second meeting serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, the Conference of the Parties took note of the report of the Working Group and called upon parties, other Governments and other stakeholders to provide financial resources for the organization of the second meeting of the Working Group before the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, scheduled to take place in Brazil in March 2006.[13]

C. Other activities and processes of relevance to the General Assembly

1. Findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment relevant to the 2010 biodiversity target and the Millennium Development Goals

19. The main findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment on biodiversity can be summarized as follows:

(a) Biodiversity is being lost at rates unprecedented in human history;

(b) Losses of biodiversity and decline of ecosystem services are of concern for human well-being, especially for the poorest;

(c) The costs borne by society due to biodiversity loss are often greater than the benefits gained through ecosystem change;

(d) The drivers of change are steady or, more often, increasing in magnitude;

(e) Many successful response options have been used, but further progress in addressing biodiversity loss will require actions to address the main drivers of biodiversity loss; and

(f) Unprecedented additional efforts would be required to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss at all levels.

20. The Assessment underlines the importance of the linkages between the 2010 biodiversity target and the Millennium Development Goals. It finds that the degradation of ecosystem services could significantly increase during the first half of this century, posing a barrier to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. At the same time, many of the actions needed to promote economic development and reduce hunger and poverty are likely to have a negative impact on biodiversity. Coordinated implementation of the goals and targets of both processes would facilitate the consideration of the trade-offs and synergies.

21. The Conference of the Parties will consider the implications of the Assessment for the Convention's work at its eighth meeting, in March 2006.

2. The Global Biodiversity Outlook

22. At its seventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, with the assistance of the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre and other relevant international organizations, to prepare the second Global Biodiversity Outlook for publication prior to the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in March 2006.[14]

23. In response to this decision, the secretariat initiated start-up activities to produce the second Global Biodiversity Outlook, including the preparation of a draft outline of the report. The report was structured specifically to serve as the primary mechanism for communicating a comprehensive assessment of progress towards the achievement of the 2010 target at the global level, as well as communicating trends in biodiversity related to the three objectives of the Convention. The content of the report will be based on the seven focal areas and their respective indicators approved by the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting, and also on additional indicators identified and approved by SBSTTA at its tenth meeting for further development and testing and eventual incorporation in the report. In

addition, the report will draw on information contained in the national reports, as well as information provided by relevant international organizations, programmes and other global assessments. The report will also address the issue of assessing the future outlook for the Convention and prospects for 2010 and beyond in the context of the Strategic Plan. It will also provide an analytical narrative of efforts required to overcome obstacles and challenges in assessing progress towards the 2010 target.

3. Cooperation with other conventions and international organizations and initiatives

24. The Executive Secretary has continued efforts to strengthen cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and initiatives. In line with decision VII/26 of the Conference of the Parties, a liaison group comprising the heads of the secretariats of the five biodiversity-related conventions (the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna or Flora (CITES), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, Iran, 1971), and the World Heritage Convention) has been established to further cooperation among these instruments and thereby to promote the achievement of the 2010 target. Further options for a global partnership for biodiversity are to be discussed at the meeting of the Working Group on Review of Implementation in September 2005. A flexible global partnership for biodiversity will provide a framework between all relevant actors to enhance implementation of the Convention and progress towards the 2010 target through improved coherence and synergy.

25. The work of the joint liaison group of the secretariats and officers of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity to promote complementarities among the three secretariats is continuing.

26. The Executive Secretary also undertook other collaborative activities with relevant conventions and international organizations. For example:

(a) The Executive Secretary co-organized the International Conference on "Biodiversity: Science and Governance", which took place from 24 to 28 January 2005 at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in Paris. The Conference produced two documents: the Paris Declaration on Biodiversity, an appeal by scientists on biodiversity; and a Conference Statement, which recalls Governments' commitments to the 2010 biodiversity target and supports the launch of an international multi-stakeholder consultative process to assess scientific information and policy options for decision-making;

(b) As part of the celebrations for the International Day for Biological Diversity for 2005, the secretariat, in collaboration with the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment secretariat, launched the Biodiversity Synthesis Report of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, on 19 May 2005 in Montreal, Canada. The secretariat held a joint seminar with McGill University and the secretariat of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment aimed at providing an in-depth discussion of the report and its relationship to science and policy. The report is one of many associated reports generated by the five-year Millennium Ecosystem Assessment programme, initiated by the United Nations Secretary-General specifically to carry

out a comprehensive study of the relationship between ecosystems and human well-being. The findings of the biodiversity synthesis report underline the importance of biological diversity in providing concrete services upon which human life depends, including important security and provisioning functions. The theme of the International Day for Biological Diversity for 2005, "Biodiversity: life insurance for our changing world", was therefore particularly relevant in view of the outcomes and key issues which emerged from the launch of the Biodiversity Synthesis Report.

D. Conclusions and recommendations

27. The General Assembly may, at its sixtieth session, wish to, inter alia:

(a) *Take note* of the report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session;

(b) *Note* the outcome of the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the continuing effort to ensure the effective implementation of the Protocol;

(c) *Also note* the outcome of the tenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice;

(d) *Further note* the outcome of the work of the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas and its recommendations concerning the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, including marine protected areas beyond national jurisdiction;

(e) *Welcome* the progress made by the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-sharing regarding the negotiation of an international regime on access and benefit-sharing;

(f) *Also welcome* the establishment of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions comprising the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the World Heritage Convention and *encourage* further cooperation in order to promote complementarities and build synergies among these conventions, while respecting their independent legal status;

(g) *Urge* parties to the Convention that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Protocol to do so as soon as possible;

(h) *Note* the interdependence of the 2010 biodiversity target and the Millennium Development Goals, and the relevance of the biodiversity indicators developed under the Convention for target 9 (to "reverse the loss of environmental resources") of Millennium Development Goal 7 (to "ensure environmental sustainability");

(i) *Welcome* the report of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and *take note* of the important linkages between biodiversity, ecosystem functioning and human well-being;

(j) *Invite* the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to continue reporting to the General Assembly on the ongoing work regarding the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

Notes

[1] The report of the meeting has been circulated under the symbol UNEP/CBD/COP/8/2.

[2] SBSTTA recommendation X/1, annex.

[3] See SBSTTA recommendation X/3.

[4] The report of the meeting has been circulated under the symbol UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/2/15.

[5] See decision BS-II/10.

[6] See decision BS-II/9, annex.

[7] See decision BS-II/3.

[8] See decisions BS-II/6, BS-II/2 and BS-II/13.

[9] Decision BS-II/14.

[10] Decision BS-II/1.

[11] The report of the meeting has been circulated under the symbol UNEP/CBD/WG-ABS/3/7.

[12] See UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/2/11.

[13] See decision BS-II/11.

[14] Decision VII/30, para. 8 (a).

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Crime prevention and criminal justice

Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, to be considered in conjunction with the Report of the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (A/CONF.203/18), has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/151 of 20 December 2004. It highlights the main features of the Eleventh Congress, including the high-level segment, the discussions on the substantive items on its agenda and the outcome of the workshops held within the framework of the Congress, as well as the adoption of the Bangkok Declaration on Synergies and Responses: Strategic Alliances in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The report also contains a summary of the thematic discussion on the conclusions and recommendations of the Eleventh Congress that took place during the fourteenth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

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1. The Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was held in Bangkok from 18 to 25 April 2005. The main theme of the Congress was "Synergies and responses: strategic alliances in crime prevention and criminal justice". About 2,370 persons participated in the Congress; the participants included 88 government ministers, attorneys general and other high-level officials, in addition to other government representatives, observers for 167 non-governmental organizations and 1,135 individual experts. At the Congress and subsequently at the fourteenth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, there was recognition of the unique character of the Congress, which combined political leverage and expertise and which served as a forum for the worldwide sharing of knowledge and exchange of experience. The importance of the conclusions and recommendations of the Congress were also recognized. Profound gratitude was expressed during the Congress, as well as during the fourteenth session of the Commission, to the people and Government of Thailand for their warm and generous hospitality towards the Congress participants and for the excellent organization of the Congress.

2. The Congress was convened in accordance with paragraph (d) of the annex to General Assembly resolution 415 (V) of 1 December 1950, which provided for the convening every five years of an international congress in the field, as well as in pursuance of Assembly resolutions 46/152, annex, of 18 December 1991, 56/119 of 19 December 2001, 57/170 of 18 December 2002, 58/138 of 22 December 2003 and 59/151 of 20 December 2004.

3. Extensive preparations had taken place prior to the Congress. On the recommendation of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, acting as the preparatory body of the Congress, the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/138, in which it approved the provisional agenda for the Congress, including the substantive items of the agenda; decided on the issues to be considered by the workshops to be held within the framework of the Congress; and also decided that a high-level segment should be held during the last three days of the Congress. Regional preparatory meetings for the Congress were held in Addis Ababa from 1 to 3 March 2004, in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa; in Bangkok from 29 to 31 March 2004, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; in San José from 19 to 21 April 2004, at the invitation of the Government of Costa Rica and in cooperation with the Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders; and in Beirut from 28 to 30 April 2004, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.[1]

4. A report entitled "Fifty years of United Nations congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice: past accomplishments and future prospects" (A/CONF.203/15) was prepared by the Secretary-General of the Congress as a background document. In his report, the Secretary-General of the Congress stressed that past United Nations congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice had managed to develop material that might be regarded as "legislative", in the sense that it set out normative standards applicable to all States. Most of the material was "soft law", contained in resolutions of the relevant United Nations bodies. Increasingly, however, some of the material was being incorporated into treaty language or finding its way into the corpus of customary international law. Being the product of over a half a century of work, that material could hardly be described

as a complete "code" of recommended practices. The instruments represented areas on which it was possible to gain a wide degree of consensus at a particular time. There were some overlaps, some redundancies and some obsolescence; however, their impact in the development of criminal justice, the strengthening of the notion of the rule of law and, more generally, a universal conscience of propriety, liberty and respect for common values was unquestionable (A/CONF.203/15, para. 45).

5. The Secretary-General of the Congress noted in his report that although consolidation and reliance on the successes achieved in the 50 years that had passed since the congresses had begun were prudent and necessary, such a course of action must not stand in the way of developing and pursuing a common vision for the future. He emphasized that the international community could not afford to rest on its laurels. Much work remained to be done and more challenges were emerging daily. He noted that policy development in new areas demanding attention, such as new forms of economic crime or cybercrime, or conceptual development and implementation of new approaches to deal with emerging threats and their interrelationships were pressing needs to be addressed by the international community (A/CONF.203/15, para. 71).

6. The Congress also had before it a report on the state of crime and criminal justice worldwide (A/CONF.203/3), prepared by the Secretary-General in accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/151. A more elaborate draft study on trends in crime and justice, carried out jointly by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, was made available to the Congress for comment.

7. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/151, a high-level segment of the Congress was held from 23 to 25 April 2005. The government ministers and other high-level government officials who participated in the high-level segment highlighted the broad range of issues on the agenda of the Congress and the many changes that had taken place since the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Vienna in April 2000. It was noted that terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and organized crime had become global threats. The Congress offered the international community a unique opportunity to exchange experiences and views on how to deal with those new challenges, especially in view of their interconnected nature and their serious impact on security, stability and development, as reflected in the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change entitled "A more secure world: our shared responsibility" (A/59/565 and Corr. 1) and the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005). A number of pressing criminal justice issues were highlighted, including those relating to prison conditions and rights of victims, and the connection between criminal justice, the rule of law and global security was repeatedly underscored.

8. In conjunction with the high-level segment, a special treaty event was held to provide an opportunity for States to undertake treaty action in respect of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (General Assembly resolution 55/25, annex I) and the Protocols thereto (Assembly resolutions 55/25, annexes II and III, and 55/255, annex), the United Nations Convention against Corruption (Assembly resolution 58/4, annex) and four international instruments against terrorism deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.[2]

Sixteen treaty actions (each representing the deposit of an instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval of or accession to one of the United Nations legal instruments) were undertaken during the event. Poland deposited the fortieth instrument of accession to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, on 4 April 2005, just prior to the Congress and Zambia became the forty-first State to ratify the Protocol, depositing its instrument of accession to the Protocol during the Congress (A/CONF.203/18, para. 102 (e)). On 3 July 2005, the ninetieth day after the date of deposit of the fortieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, the Firearms Protocol entered into force.

9. The Congress considered the following substantive items of the agenda:

(a) Effective measures to combat transnational organized crime;

(b) International cooperation against terrorism and links between terrorism and other criminal activities in the context of the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime;

(c) Corruption: threats and trends in the twenty-first century;

(d) Economic and financial crimes: challenges to sustainable development;

(e) Making standards work: fifty years of standard-setting in crime prevention and criminal justice.

For its consideration of those items, it had before it the working papers (A/CONF.203/4 and Corr.1, A/CONF.203/5, A/CONF.203/6 and A/CONF.203/7) and the discussion guide (A/CONF.203/PM.1 and Corr.1) that had been prepared by the Secretariat and the reports of the regional preparatory meetings. The conclusions and recommendations made by the Congress under each of those agenda items are included in the report of the Congress (A/CONF.203/18, chap. V).

10. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/151, workshops were organized with the assistance of the institutes comprising the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network on the following topics:

(a) Enhancing international law enforcement cooperation, including extradition measures;

(b) Enhancing criminal justice reform, including restorative justice;

(c) Strategies and best practices for crime prevention, in particular in relation to urban crime and youth at risk;

(d) Measures to combat terrorism, with reference to the relevant international conventions and protocols;

(e) Measures to combat economic crime, including money-laundering;

(f) Measures to combat computer-related crime.

The conclusions and recommendations of the workshops are contained in the report on the Congress (A/CONF.203/18, chap. VI).

11. In addition, 42 ancillary meetings were organized by non-governmental organizations during the Congress, and more than 20 national position papers were

presented by Governments before or during the Congress, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/151.

12. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/151, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had started to prepare a draft declaration during the intersessional period following its thirteenth session, to be made available at least one month prior to the commencement of the Congress. In order to facilitate the preparation of the draft declaration, the Government of Thailand conducted informal consultations with other interested Governments and regional groups concerning the format and content of the draft declaration. An open-ended informal group, chaired by Thailand, held 12 meetings in which a large number of countries in all regions were represented and agreed on a preliminary text of the draft declaration. That text was endorsed at an intersessional meeting of the Commission held in March 2005 and was made available to all Member States. The preliminary text served as the basis for the deliberations on the draft declaration during the Congress.

13. On 25 April 2005, the Congress adopted the Bangkok Declaration on Synergies and Responses: Strategic Alliances in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (A/CONF.203/18, chap. I, resolution 1). The Bangkok Declaration addresses major crime and criminal justice issues of concern for the international community, such as transnational organized crime, trafficking in human beings, corruption, terrorism, money-laundering, cybercrime, treatment of prisoners, juvenile justice and restorative justice, and calls for enhanced international cooperation, including through the implementation of existing international instruments on crime prevention and terrorism and through the provision of technical assistance upon request. The Bangkok Declaration, a crucial political document, lays the foundation and shows the direction for future action by the international community in strengthening international coordination and cooperation efforts in order to prevent and combat crime.

14. In its resolution 59/151, the General Assembly requested the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its fourteenth session to give high priority to considering the conclusions and recommendations of the Eleventh Congress, with a view to recommending, through the Economic and Social Council, appropriate follow-up by the Assembly at its sixtieth session. Accordingly, the thematic discussion of the Commission was focused on possible ways and means of putting into effect the road map contained in the Bangkok Declaration, in order to create synergy and galvanize strategic alliances in the fight against crime. Several options were proposed for consideration, taking into account the experiences made with the follow-up to the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century, adopted by the Tenth Congress in April 2000 and endorsed by the General Assembly by its resolution 55/59 of 4 December 2000. Further details of that discussion are contained in the report of the Commission on its fourteenth session.[3]

15. During the fourteenth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, a workshop on the theme "Working modalities and substantive results: report on the Eleventh Congress workshops and ancillary meetings" was organized by the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network and coordinated by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute with a view to considering the

recommendations made at the workshops held during the Congress and to discuss their follow-up. At that session of the Commission, it was noted that the potential for exchange of information provided by the congresses could be enhanced by ensuring a more focused formulation of the subjects to be covered by the workshops, by providing for more interaction between experts and delegations and by using the results of the workshops as input for the discussion of substantive items.[4]

16. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/151, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice recommended that the Economic and Social Council approve for adoption by the Assembly a draft resolution entitled "Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice",[5] in which the Assembly would endorse the Bangkok Declaration adopted by the Eleventh Congress, invite Governments to take the Declaration and the recommendations adopted by the Congress into consideration in formulating legislation and policy directives and invite Member States to identify areas where further tools and training manuals based on international standards and best practices would be needed. In the draft resolution, the Assembly would also request the Secretary-General to seek proposals by Member States for ways and means of ensuring appropriate follow-up to the Declaration for consideration and action by the Commission at its fifteenth session. The Assembly would also request the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to engage in consultations with the Governments of the States that have offered to host the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, to be held in 2010, and to report thereon to the Commission.

Notes

[1] For the reports of the regional preparatory meetings, see A/CONF.203/RPM.1/1, A/CONF.203/RPM.2/1, A/CONF.203/RPM.3/1 and Corr.1 and A/CONF.203/RPM.4/1.

[2] The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents (General Assembly resolution 3166 (XXVIII), annex); the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages (Assembly resolution 34/146, annex); the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (Assembly resolution 52/164, annex); and the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (Assembly resolution 54/109, annex).

[3] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 10* (E/2005/30), chap. III.

[4] Ibid., para. 46.

[5] Ibid., chap. I, sect. A, draft resolution II.